THE IRISH PUB AS A 'THIRD PLACE': A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF PEOPLE, PLACE AND IDENTITY

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material which I now submit for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of PhD is entirely my own work and has not been taken from others, save the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of study.

Signed

Dedication

For granmaw and papaw.

Acknowledgments

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Abstract

There is considerable interest in alcohol in Irish society, yet minimal sociological understanding of its consumption, particularly of the sites where most drinking occurs: the country's 8,750 pubs. Despite widespread public discussions on the role of the pub, there is scant social science evidence to better inform debate.

Pubs are central to Irish community and are key sites of social interaction. American sociologist Ray Oldenburg has argued that 'third places' (neither workplace nor home) are crucial to the maintenance of the community and the enhancement of social capital. According to Oldenburg, the role of the third place in the community is to provide continuity, regularity, a sense of place – all of which conceptually contribute to the construction of the self, the projection of the self within the public sphere, the distribution of social capital and the generation of a collective identity. The pub is the archetypal third place, but Oldenburg is concerned that modern pubs are less able to provide this vital function.

Social scientists have suggested that community is in a state of fragmentation and decline due to changes in modes of social interaction and a decrease in shared spaces, resulting in a weakened connection to place. Community without propinquity has been characterised by social alienation, fragmentation and what Oldenburg refers to as the 'problem of place' (13). Third places, and thus the Irish pub, have been particularly affected.

In order to increase the sociological knowledge of the pub in Ireland, this project critically engages with the pub to assess the importance that public drinking houses have in the everyday. Moreover, this research sets out to investigate the people/place relationship using the pub as an investigative lens and examine the ways in which people shape place, place shapes people and how that relationship is implicated in the construction of Irish identities. Furthermore, this is also an articulation of a cultural shift within Ireland and Irish places whose effects are deep

and multi-layered. This project aims to explore the development of the contemporary geography of identity as the Irish pub as a third place is transformed or disappears from the social landscape.

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Introduction and Context of Research

Introduction

After moving to the North West of Ireland over seven years ago, I started going with some regularity to the pub. As an American, I was initially impressed by the ease with which I could enter into these places and immediately feel a sense of belonging and familiarity. Certain pubs were more desirable than others for seemingly arbitrary reasons – the subtle dimness of lighting, the volume of music and chat, the height of the ceiling, the presence of familiar faces, the friendliness of bar staff, a general perception of intimacy and cosiness. Over time, I was drawn to a small handful of pubs and soon developed a relationship with one pub in particular. I made several friends and many acquaintances in these locations and noticed that the people I knew gravitated towards these places as well. I also found myself feeling 'good' in these pubs, surrounded by people I knew and liked, listening to music that I might very well listen to in my own home. Through this experience of place, I wanted to better understand the connections that are formed in the pub between individuals and groups and was curious to explore the intimate ties that people develop with pub places. The appeal of the pub place emerged, in part, from listening to the shared memories and narratives of pub happenings that were woven throughout the everyday lives of individuals. Moreover, I became increasingly interested in the complexity of the cultural landscape of the pub from a sociological perspective and wanted to know who attends pubs and why. I was keen to understand pub culture as a multi-sensory, located experience and closely examine the impact of place as it affects individuals, groups and Irish society as a whole. My personal journey as an outsider entering into pub culture and becoming a regular was the starting point for this project.

Going to the pub

I begin this account with a story that will help to contextualise some of the themes that are found throughout this research project. This narrative begins in a well-known pub in the North West of Ireland prior to the commencement of the research. The initial experiences were in the capacity of a visitor. Once I began to work on this project, I revisited this place several more times. My journeys to this establishment were epiphanal in that they fundamentally transformed how I understood the interaction that occurred between place and people. Later, I drew on my initial perceptions to inform a more studied observation.

My first visit, recalled from memory with the help of my husband, was unique. He wanted to show me those places he had frequented as a child and young adult during his stays in the Donegal Gaeltacht. The pub was located nowhere in particular, cattycorner (diagonal and across the way) to another pub and several kilometres away from a caravan park and pub/restaurant used mainly by visitors from Northern Ireland over the July holidays. A further 15 minutes away was a small village with several hotels and pubs.

This particular pub was especially well known among locals, seasonal residents and international tourists as a music pub and venue. To say I was initially unimpressed by my first encounter would be an understatement. It was late afternoon and the place was empty. As opposed to some of the other pubs in the area that were more aligned to my romantic, Hollywood vision of the Irish pub, this tavern was purely functional in design. Upon entering the building, you were in the centre of long open space with a high ceiling that one suspects was once a narrow barn, storage facility or possibly an extended cottage. The bar was at the far end of the room surrounded by high velveteen-upholstered stools and at the opposite end of the structure was a small, elevated, wooden stage. The pub was adorned with plastic and cardboard beer advertisements from the 1980s, a number of them featuring beer ads and several promoting Irish rock bands from another era. Music awards were haphazardly hung on the wall as decoration and for the tourists were the main

point of attraction. The primary beverage available (judging by the number of taps) was pints of Guinness Stout and later in the evening when the pub filled up, it was the preferred drink for the majority of patrons. There was also a small number of spirits available, several international lagers on tap (Carlsberg, Budweiser and Heineken), tea and instant coffee.

I was immediately impressed by the amount of smoke in the air despite the fact that we were the only clientele in the pub. The darkness was extraordinary and the sensation of being within the windowless building felt subterranean, as if time had been suspended. This feeling was intermittently interrupted each time the front door opened and natural light flooded into the room. These were peculiar experiences because they afforded one the opportunity to more clearly take in the entire space: to see the maroon and black patterned carpet; the velveteen bar stool covers; the textured wall paper; etc. and created a moment where one was temporarily brought back into the day.

Another feature of the pub that was immediately noticeable was the powerful odour. In addition to the cigarette smoke, stale beer, the faint waft of perfume, cheese and onion crisps, urine, bleach and toilet cleaner, livestock, sweet grass, the ocean, dust and sweat all blended together to create an unique olfactory blend to which I would eventually become accustomed on my many visits to the pub. Katovich and Reese (1987), fellow drinking house observers, noted similar sensations in their investigation of an American counterpart:

> As ventilation was minimal ... the smell of beer, smoke, bayberry, and bodily residue remained to greet the patrons day after day. The odor was a frequent focus of attention and ... was a source of either pride or disdain. To some male regulars, the odor, darkness, and appearance of the Derby [Lounge] made it a 'man's place' ... that, as another regular noted, 'is not for the squeamish.' (315)

As the afternoon progressed regulars and visitors began to trickle in. Regulars, all male, positioned themselves at the bar and visitors, couples and families began to fill in the tabled seating in the middle of the pub. An important feature of drinking

houses throughout the world, regulars have 'established the tripodal base of their contentment. They have incorporated home, work, and sociability into a daily pattern of activity and attendance' (Oldenburg, 1999: 177). These men, judging from their work clothes and accents, were clearly from the immediate locale and knew each other with some degree of familiarity. They were, however, courteous to us in our role of 'outsiders' and appeared innocuously nosy asking 'where were we staying? How did we get here? Who did we know? Who were we related to?'

Fig. 1 The regulars.

Recorded Irish music was piped into the sound system, the volume of conversation increased with the smoke levels and music and the general feel of the place became increasingly convivial. An interesting observation at the time was how the ramshackle appearance, which seemed run down and depressing during the day, somehow became endearing in the evening when, full of revellers, live music, drinking and dancing, it felt cosy and welcoming. We found ourselves unwitting participants in several rounds and it became obvious that some sort of logic was being applied to the purchase and retrieval of drinks from the bar for large groups of people throughout the pub. Warm from the turf fire at the back of the pub and with a belly full of stout and crisps, it was easy to feel friendly and sociable.

Later, as I became engaged with the research, I came to understand that the combination of being together in a public place – in this case the pub – has a particular affect on the behaviour and experiences of people. Furthermore, the combined act of drinking and conversing contributes to the sociable nature of the pub and can be described as a 'talking/drinking synergism' (Oldenburg, 1999: 167). This effect of drinking together, as noted by a number of observers (Oldenburg, 1999; Park, 1995; Rooney, 1991):

> is symbolic ... [of the] manifestation of the solidarity of 'friends' or kinship groups, of the acceptance of the individual ... as a 'man among men,' [sic] as an equal in his own ... drinking together is a manifestation of the equality and solidarity of town and country folk, of the guest and host, the politician and his [sic] constituents, the seller and the buyer. (Bales, 1962: 9)

By eleven o'clock the place was packed. To have a conversation meant some degree of shouting and the live music, which included audience participation and group singing, had replaced the recorded soundtrack. The publican, a large burly Donegal man, played a few songs on a large piano accordion to the delight of the audience. From later visits I came to realise this event was part of the weekend routine that was enjoyed by locals, visitors and tourists.

At this point in the evening I had carried out conversations with the people seated to either of my side, the barman and several women I had encountered in the toilets. I heard several conversations conducted entirely in Gaelic. What had began as a quiet afternoon in a rather unexceptional place had transformed into an unexpected evening of entertainment, socialising and craic.[1] The feel of the place had shifted with the evening gathering of people who seemed to effortlessly create a sense of place that was inclusive and convivial. This experience was repeated at each subsequent visit and although I never became a regular at this particular location, over the course of a several visits I began to recognise a number of characters. This feeling of familiarity motivated me to return to the pub each time I was in the area. After the first visit, I noticed that the daytime appearance of the place no longer

seemed offensive, but had instead become situated with memories and inhabited by what sociologist Michael Bell refers to as the presence of the 'ghosts of place':

> Although the cultural language of modernity usually prevents us from speaking about their presence, we constitute a place in large measure by the ghosts we sense inhabit and possess it.... Ghosts also help constitute the specificity of historical sites, of the places where we feel we belong and do not belong, of the boundaries of possession by which we assign ownership and nativeness. Ghosts of the living and dead alike, of both individual and collective spirits, of both other selves and our own selves, haunt the places of our lives. Places are, in a word, personed - even when there is no one there. (Bell, 1997: 813)

I had visited the Donegal pub a number of times as a visitor and once I became established in the project, I decided to return in the capacity of researcher. As I pulled into the parking area, I was surprised to see that it had changed from an open, weedy, gravel yard to a well-lit, evenly paved lot with a newly built stone wall. The place I had visited before, to my alarm, had vanished and in its place was a brand new, modern and somewhat generic pub. At first I thought I was in the wrong location. It had been two years since my last visit, however, and after much confusion I realised the pub had been levelled, redesigned and rebuilt.

The new pub had both a side door and a front entrance and was divided into a dining area and a bar. These sections, however, were not strictly segregated and the partition between the spaces contained a large, open passageway. The interior of the pub was now furnished with tasteful blonde pine benches and matching chairs and tables. The patterned and stained wall-to-wall had been replaced with terracotta tiles and hard wood floors and was consistent with the Italian-style wrought iron fixtures, track lighting and sizeable mirrors now mounted on the walls. Large plate glass windows with curtains had been designed into the new structure. The general impression was one of cleanliness and brightness. One informant described the changes as 'sanitised' and 'anonymous.' The smoking ban had also taken effect[2] by this point and the air was clean and clear. The pungent

[1] The term 'crack' was 'borrowed into the Irish language with a Gaelicized spelling ("craic")' and means 'fun, enjoyment, abandonment, or lighthearted mischief, often in the context of drinking or music' (Wikipedia, Crack [Craic], n.d.).
[2] The smoking ban commenced on March 29th, 2004 (Department of Health and Children, 2004).

old pub odour had been completely eradicated, taken out with the old floor and walls of the previous site.

A more noticeable change, however, was the people. A younger clientele seemed to have taken over and although I'm sure some of the regulars continued to frequent the bar, I no longer recognised any faces from the nearby caravan park or local community. The patrons were also much better dressed. Young women in expensive designer evening wear and high heels and young men in pressed shirts and hair gel were now occupying the bar. Visitors from the North and international tourists were still present in small groups sitting around tables, but they appeared less integrated with the rest of the pub clientele. Although the pub felt friendly, the level of socialising was more contained and limited to specific groupings of people.

New drinks had also become available and I noticed the beer mats advertised mixers and made references to the popular TV show *Sex and the City*. The recorded music was no longer traditional Irish music or Irish rock but instead top 40 pop and R&B. While I recognised some remnants from the former house that had been salvaged and remounted on the new walls, the overall impression of the new place was one of a suburban household. The drinking styles of the new crowd were also notable. While drunkenness certainly occurred on the former premises, on this occasion and subsequent visits to the new site large groups of young men consumed pints of beer rapidly and with voracity. Some of the women were keeping up with the bingeing of the men.

Leaving aside discussions of nostalgia and authenticity, it occurred to me that the original pub produced a very different place experience than the current version. Something had happened not only to the physical environment, but the sense of place had shifted and the people had changed. The first pub had felt contextualised within the rural, Irish-speaking setting of North West Donegal and while it had capitalised on its music and history to draw tourists, the impact on the physical environment was minimal. For example, as noted the pub was known as a music

venue, but this appeared to emerge from a natural interest of the publican and the surrounding community as opposed to a deliberate themeing. The newer pub, however, while appearing 'nicer', seemed less distinctive and indeed, was indistinct from any number of pubs I had attended in other places at other times. Over the course of this research I discovered that many pubs been built or reconstructed in a similar manner. The ways in which people influence and experience these changes is a central theme to this project.

The analysis of these observations could have easily been reduced to a binary discourse on the past and the present, the authentic and the simulated, the traditional and the postmodern. While these themes were significant in the understanding of the development of pub places, a wider investigation into place-making, the experience of place and the subtle affects of places on people was key to this research. This project is about the ways that people determine space, define place and give place meaning through an exploration of the Irish pub. It is also concerned with the uses of the geography and how place impacts the lives of the people who inhabit it. Through a more detailed examination of the Irish pub a better understanding of the people/place relationship can be obtained. Finally, this project intends to produce a more complex understanding of pub places.

The importance of place: the context and key themes of the research

Places are defined, awarded with meaning and acquire much of their permanence from the behaviours and activities of the people who inhabit them. Place can be described as those spaces that have been differentiated as a result of a specific set of social relations and power dynamics The interdependent relationship of people and place is constantly constructed and reconstructed within a system of meaning that is informed by a unique blend of culture, community and circumstance. A sense of place derives its definition and meaning from sources in the everyday locale such as a shared history, experience of the landscape, memories or culture.

The activity of place making may occur organically in time and space or may be deliberately created, as found, for example, in touristic or themed places.

In his work *The Great Good Place* (1999) American sociologist Ray Oldenburg has argued strongly that what he terms 'third places' are crucial to the maintenance of the community and the enhancement of social capital. A third place can be defined as a 'home from home' that is distinguished from both the domestic sphere and the workplace and is located within a context that links the individual to their everyday socio-geographical surroundings. Located within the public, the pub acts as a communal environment while providing an intimacy similar to the home place. Third places provide a basis for sociability, a support for democracy and a means of escape from the stresses of everyday life. They are equally important to human health, community survival and social cohesion.

Oldenburg has recognised a number of characteristics to identify third places: informality, inclusiveness, locality, assembly, novelty, diversity, low profile and part of everyday life. Third places provide the members of a community with meeting points, public characters, neutral gathering sites for young and old to interact, a political and intellectual forum, comfort, pleasure and often a degree of social care for community members.

Broadly speaking, it is clear from the above description of the Donegal public house that Irish pubs are distinctive environments that are central to community life and are organised by special rules of behaviour and conduct. A primary function of this separate public site is to provide relaxation and 'time-out' from day-to-day life (Graves *et al*, 1981), an everyday escape from the pressures of home and work. As a semi-public space, the pub is successful in that it permits leisure in the familiar while also affording anonymity and solitude if so desired. Pub places and the subsequent use of alcohol act as social levellers and often promote social bonding networks through the provision of an equalising environment. The pub place in Ireland has been so successful in fact, that it has come to be identified as a sign of

Irish hospitality and embedded in national identities of 'Irishness'. Pubs are the quintessential third place in Ireland.[3]

Recently, however, the smoking ban, issues of rural transport and the reduced pricing of alcohol in off-license retail have been identified by publicans and the Vintners Federation of Ireland (VFI) as threatening the well-being of the rural pub and the rural community as a whole. For example, County Mayo suffered the majority of pub closures (23) in the first two years of the smoking ban, accounting for 14 per cent of the pub venues in the county (Loftus, 2006). The North West counties of Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo have also seen a worrying increase in pub closures, particularly in more remote rural areas ('*Pub closures in 2006*,' 2007). Drinking levels, however, have risen dramatically from consumption rates of a decade ago (Mongan *et al*, 2007). Although the economy has flourished in recent years and consumption levels have soared, a gradual repudiation of pub places appears to have occurred (Foley, 2004). Alcohol use is no longer exclusively partnered with the place of the pub.

Recent reports on decreasing pub attendance and pub closures have generated public concern and a similar occurrence in America suggests an ominous future for the Irish pub:

> Few trends in American life are as pronounced as the rejection of the public drinking establishment. Despite the greater comfort offered, despite the flocked wallpaper, giant television screens, ... two-for-price-of-one drinks, a lowered drinking age, appeals to women who appeal to men, rock musicians, and a host of other lures, American drinking establishments are losing ground to the private consumption of alcoholic beverages.... The tavern is a failing institution, perhaps even an endangered species.... While avoiding few, if any, of the problems surrounding alcoholic beverages, the nation is losing the

[3] Public houses, or pubs for short, are also sometimes referred to as taverns, bars, lounges and inns. Pub, however, is the most widely used term in Ireland to refer to the public drinking house. The pub, as other cross-cultural drinking house counterparts, can generally be described as a semi-public place that is open to members of the community and employs personnel to serve alcohol as its primary function (Clinard, 1962: 270 – 271). Also, it must be noted that from here pubs refer to those drinking houses in rural areas or towns, as urban geographies have yet to fully develop in the North West of Ireland. Furthermore, rural and town pubs, as I will argue within this project, are also more emblematic of collective Irish identity. For a description of urban pubs in Ireland, see Kearns (1996) and Curtin and Ryan (1989).

> socially solidifying rituals of public drinking within inclusive and democratic settings. (Oldenburg, 1999: 166)

Moreover, Oldenburg argues that as contemporary pubs are increasingly commodified and subject to corporatisation, pub places are jeopardised and this unique geography becomes altered as a result of social, cultural and economic trends. A shift in Irish pub industry confirms Oldenburg's analysis - the rise of the 'superpub', themed bars, private clubs and increased restriction on access are features of contemporary pub culture. Within this context, I will argue that the pub is used as a venue for the construction of the individual as opposed to a site of community networks and relationships, becoming an 'extension of the domain of the self' (Panofsky, 1991: 68). Furthermore, as previously noted, the smoking ban and recent policy on drink driving have also influenced pub use and have encouraged an increase in home-based leisure. As a result of these developments, private places are overtaking pubs as sites of leisure. Individuals and groups are also frequently choosing to socialise in domestic places so that the social environment can be controlled and personalised in conjunction with lifestyle preferences. We know little of the social effects of these changes.

Notwithstanding recent increases in the home consumption of alcohol and the decrease in pub attendance, approximately 70% of alcoholic drink continues to be consumed within the confines of the pub (Finfacts, 2007). Internationally this remains a high proportion despite recent changes. In addition to providing the primary site for alcohol consumption, the pub is arguably one of the pillars of Irish community and endures as a key site of social interaction. Despite the primary role of the pub in Irish community, particularly within rural places, and the more recent controversies of the activities taking place in and around the pub (binge drinking, drink driving, drug taking, etc.), there is a dearth of investigative literature on the topic. While some community studies have touched on the topic of the pub, Inglis is justified in his remark that we 'still await a major study and history of this important social institution' (2002: 31). Ireland is not alone in this regard: in the

British context Watson (2002) has similarly remarked on the paucity of analysis of the pub and its consequent neglect in sociological literature.

Over the course of this research, I encountered largely positive reactions to my investigation into the pub. People were curious as to what approach I was taking on the topic – would I be investigating the smoking ban? Binge drinking? Pub closures? The subject of this thesis, however, while inclusive of a number of these discursive topics, is focused on the fundamental nature of pub culture and the ways in which it is formed and functions in the day-to-day lives of its inhabitants. Overall this project intends to critically engage with the pub, to significantly increase the sociological understanding of pub places and to assess the importance that public houses have in the everyday. The central theme to guide this discussion is the people/place relationship - the ways in which people shape place, place shapes people and the mechanisms through which places and identities are co-produced through this relationship. Here I am interested in the complexity of place formation and in the formative processes of place. In the unique role of third place, the Irish pub is an ideal location to document and analyse this relationship. Moreover, this research aims to examine changing conceptualisations of place and identity and extensively expand the concept of the third place.

Structure of the project: places, flows and spirals

I have divided the following material based on the nature of each particular aspect of the people/place relationship. In this way, I move from the landscape and into pubs, where they are discussed as third places, gendered places, sites of embodiment, geographies of identities, touristed spaces, domestic[ated] dwellings, lifestyle venues, postmodern 'fourth' places (Wenner, 1997) and repudiated places. At times, the places and themes overlap and alternate according to scale, threading in and out of the lived environment of the pub with an emphasis on the various interconnections. As such, the following sequence of chapters will be presented to consider a number of key themes linked to the people/place relationship through

the investigative lens of the pub. Furthermore, by applying concepts of place to this investigation, a better understanding of the Irish pub can be obtained. Therefore each chapter will cover a different aspect of the pub and pub culture.

Chapters one and two of this project provide a thematic overview of ideas and theories and their application to this investigation. Chapter one sets out an understanding of place and describes how a knowledge of places is crucial to comprehending social worlds, human relationships and identity. As I shall show, place:

> is not only what is fleetingly observed on the landscape, a locale, or setting for activity and social interaction. It also is what takes place ceaselessly, what contributes to history in a specific context through the creation and utilisation of a physical setting. (Phed in Duncan and Ley [eds], 1993: 262 – 263)

This chapter proposes that a number of concepts including place, experience and identity are intrinsically linked. Public places are where people ultimately negotiate their identities through displayed behaviours and actions within a lived community. Place is often unconsciously understood through a sensed presence of social dynamics, place meaning and the experience *of* and experiences *in* place. The on-going experience of shared activities within public spaces and third places in particular leads to contingent knowledges of place and contributes to the formation of individual and group identities. Inter-personal relations of power and identity also create the boundaries through which place is defined. The people/place relationship can thus be described as cyclical - people both create and are informed by place. In my identification of the Irish pub as a location where identities are differentially constituted, I provide a conceptual outline to introduce a sense of place, emotional geographies and the formation and perpetuity of the pub as a third place.

In response to the challenges introduced above, a methodological and theoretical outline of place and people is presented in chapter two. The unfolding of the research process was congruous to the thematic flow of the project and this chapter

should be viewed as counterpart to the conceptual overview of the previous chapter. Here, I describe how the methodology was aligned to the theoretical approaches and crafted so that the multifarious nature of pub places and pub culture could emerge and be explored. I selected those research practices that were compatible with the everyday nature of pub culture to produce a comprehensive examination of the Irish third place. I also sought to develop a methodological approach that would capitalise on my background in both sociology and anthropology, encompassing a complex understanding of the social dynamics of pub places and the larger cultural context in which pub culture is produced. Early on I determined a need to develop an intimacy with the place of the pub and the people who inhabited it. The strategy for this approach required an immersion into the everyday experience of pub culture and pub places to produce a multi-dimensional understanding. Therefore an evolving methodological approach was applied to this project that included participant observation, ethnographic studies and in-depth interviews. This layered approach resonated with the research agenda to explore the pub from the inside and the outside and provided an opportunity to focus on the two analytic categories of place and identity. The intensity of this research process allowed for a personalised place intimacy to develop over time and space in addition to obtaining a first hand account of the people/place relationship. Participant observations allowed me to become increasingly aware of the day-to-day rhythm of pub places and provided me with a means to gain a deeper understanding of pub culture, while interviews helped me to understand the experience of pub inhabitants.

Place emerges from a specific set of social and cultural relations in time and space. In the case of the pub in Ireland, a unique set of socio-historical circumstances converged that led to the development of the pub as a third place. Chapters three and four are structured to present a multi-layered socio-historical framework from which the unique place of the Irish pub emerged. These chapters discuss the construction of the place of the pub as a third place and the role of the drinking house in the development of Irish drinking patterns. Chapter three explores how

alcohol practices developed concurrently to Irish pub culture and became principally based within the place of the pub. Alcohol consumption is linked to several themes that are based within the lived environment of the pub – social exchange and reciprocity, the shared experience of social belonging and a mechanism of identity construction and expression. The emergence of pub places was inextricably linked to the social construction and expression of drinking in Ireland.

Chapter four investigates how place obtains its meaning as it is formed. Here, I explore the social, political and economic changes that occurred in Ireland from the mid-1800s, to the turn of the century, independence and within a newly formed nation through the reconstruction of the everyday and the development of new places. This chapter investigates how place obtains its meaning as it is created. The cultural logic of the Irish pub involves the relation of public drinking to a semi-public space and includes expressions of gender, power and identity. As the primary site for the cultural use of alcohol and as a designated space for the construction and expression of identities of in-group status, hegemonic masculinity and social networks, the pub solidified its position on the Irish cultural landscape. Place-based alcohol consumption was formalised as a vehicle to create and express identities in response to newly established hegemonies:

> It served as town hall, council chamber, sleeping resort for bachelors … trophy hall, and club. Women and children seldom visited there.... The men's house had special meaning for the boys of the tribe. Admittance to it signified the attainment of manhood. Following a rite of passage … the boy became a man and a member of the club at the same time. His transition to adulthood was also a transition from the world of his mother to that of his father or uncle. Following the rite of passage, the boy … departed the world of women [the domestic family home] and entered the world of men. (Oldenburg, 1999: 239)

Within this historical context, one begins to understand how 'space is essential to all exercises of power' (Wenner, 1997: 72) as identities of power, gender and nationalism are constructed and expressed. It is within this framework that the contemporary Irish pub developed and evolved.

Next, I bring the background material into the present through a discussion of pubs as contemporary identity-resolving forums. Chapter five examines the formative processes of the pub in which the place-based activities and behaviours contribute to the construction and display of identities. In this sense, pub spaces act as 'habitats of meaning' (Hannerz, 1996) as they afford individuals and groups with public sites to enact everyday social practices and frame interpretations of social activities. This chapter continues the analysis from chapter four concerning the relationship of place, gender and alcohol. This topic is integrated into a wider discussion of Oldenburg's understanding of the third place (1999). Here, I draw on some of Oldenburg's themes to outline the Irish pub as a site of extensive social interaction that includes alcohol consumption, communication and reciprocity. Pub-based alcohol consumption, for example, has been structured according to a series of known principles that denote and express status, alliance and in-group membership. Rounds' drinking indicates a willingness to participate in a group activity and a belonging to place. These activities signify place-based group membership and lead to the development of relationships of trust with others. More recently, however, the symbolic act of drinking together has changed and may be modified or subverted depending on the identities of the participants. In its place, individualistic styles of drinking have been established and group membership is increasingly self-selected. While the pub continues, in many cases, to fulfil the role of Irish third place and thus act as an identity-resolving forum, changes in the relationship to space and place are occurring. In this chapter I analyse the interdependence of the people/place relationship through the discussion of how places affect the identities of people and how people create place. Chapter five also introduces the concept of the shifting nature of pub places in contemporary Ireland, suggesting that place is not static but in a constant state of construction and reconstruction, developing in tandem with social and cultural transformations.

One of the significant changes to occur within the Irish third place is the intensive development and promotion of the pub as a site of touristic consumption.

Contemporary pub culture has been heavily influenced by the permeation of tourists, and as a result, tourist discourse has been germane to the construction of the modern Irish pub. Here I explore how tourism alters the projection of a collective identity within a significant habitat of meaning. Pub culture has been increasingly developed in the created spectacle of heritage and history and I argue that the individual and collective search for meaning in time and place by the Irish people, like the tourist, has been influenced by this experience. Chapter six outlines the role of diaspora tourism in the shaping of the contemporary Irish pub experience and the impact on Irish identities as this site of the everyday has been modified to satisfy the needs of tourists. This chapter will describe some of the problems inherent in such constraints of 'culture' for touristic consumption as the pub has been co-opted for the tourist gaze. In this context I question the meaning of identities as both fixed and fluid in relation to the Irish third place and I explore the role of place-based narratives in the production of diasporic identities.

As suggested, a full range of questions concerning the changing nature of Irish culture and society is implicated in the investigation of pub places. The final section composed of chapters seven and eight is centred on the transforming landscape of the Irish pub. Several central themes orient the last two chapters and suggest the complexities of place in an increasingly globalised Ireland: an increased focus on consumption and lifestyle, changing places and the repudiation of place. Situating the ideas of place, public place and third place in the context of globalisation, Oldenburg (1999), Watson (2002) and Urry (1995) have suggested that the changing modes of social interaction have distanced individuals from community through suburbanisation, niche socialising, commodification and fragmentation. As Hiss (1999) aptly notes, 'we're having to learn … that no place is automatically immune from development pressures these days' (162). Chapter seven will draw in a discussion on Celtic Tiger[4] 'collision culture' (Keohane and

[4] The term 'Celtic Tiger' refers to the economic boom that started in Ireland in the early 1990s. Deboer-Ashworth (2004) notes: 'The boom at the beginning of the period saw Ireland acquire the nickname "the Celtic Tiger", and its export growth, particularly in the high technology sectors, was widely applauded' (1).

Kuhling, 2000) and will examine the reshaping of time, space, place and identity within the context of contemporary Ireland. This chapter also explores the impact of the use of space and place to meet consumption and lifestyle needs. I examine the increasing use of domestic space for leisure and lifestyle, the emerging trend of creating pub spaces as sites of middle-class leisure and the blurring between public and private spaces. The final chapter looks at the contemporary changes taking place within the Irish pub and the emergence of new spaces that are redefining the people/place relationship and rapidly superseding the use of the Irish third place.

Conclusion

Pub places are complex social landscapes that are constantly evolving and changing, their transformations in time and space aligned to shifts in the social and cultural landscape. Located within the public domain and separate from both the domestic sphere and the work place, people enjoy pubs because they provide a known location situated within the everyday to engage in conversation, consume alcohol and relax. More specifically, the draw of the pub is based on a culmination of sensory experiences, emotional attachments through an individual and collective understanding of place meaning and the provision of an identity-resolving forum.

The broad theoretical interest of this research encompasses a number of approaches to explore questions concerning the sociology of the pub. I am interested in those points of intersection and overlap and have composed a rich, descriptive and multifarious understanding of pub places, pub inhabitants and the pub as a significant feature of Irish culture, with a vision towards a sociology of the Irish third place. A number of ideas are central to this project and act to consistently orient the structure of this project: pub places, pub users and the people/place relationship. The object of this research is to introduce an analysis of place and to apply the concept of the 'third place' in order to gain an understanding of the development of the public drinking house in Ireland. Through the exploration of conceptualisations of place, I will provide new insights into the development of the

public house as the primary site of informal public life in the communities of this region and throughout Irish society as a whole. The investigation of pub places also provides an effective means of understanding concepts of place and the people/place relationship.

Through the analysis of the Irish pub this project will explore the shifting relationship of place and identity in contemporary Ireland. Overall, I aim to increase the sociological understanding of contemporary pubs and to assess their importance to the construction and projection of Irish identities.

Chapter One: *Introduction to Space, place and identity*

Introduction

Pubs have been vital to community life in Ireland and continue to thrive as key sites of social interaction. Because of its central position on the Irish cultural landscape the pub is an ideal location to explore the relationship between place and people. This project is about the ways in which people construct and use place and how place affects people. How do we perform our lives in place and how does place inform the ways in which we feel, think and behave? The central theme of this project is to determine the people/place relationship through the lens of the pub in Ireland *and* to increase the sociological understanding of the pub in time and space. Furthermore, an investigation into the Irish pub is useful in the exploration of places and third places in particular.

Included in this chapter is an introduction to the ways in which social spaces are used, experienced and awarded with meaning. Here I explore the relationship of place, social capital and everyday life and the relation of these themes to a conceptual understanding of the social experience (community, identity, etc.). This, in part, will inform the discussions on collective identity and group membership located throughout this research. Within this context, I will discuss the Irish pub as a chief site in the formation of social capital networks. This chapter will also outline and analyse the basic tenets of the 'third place' and introduce Oldenburg's theory as it relates to the Irish pub in the North West of Ireland. Concepts of the third place will be drawn into a general discussion of place-making and the role of successful places in the well being of individuals and communities.

The Irish pub can be identified as what social geographer Stephen Daniels (1993) describes as a 'particular landscape' that has attained cultural status as a 'habitat of meaning' (Hannerz, 1996). Comprehending experiences and meanings of pub places encompasses concepts of human agency and discourses of power. The

visceral experience of place, that is the physicality of lived spaces, is an important aspect to this discussion. Related to this conceptual agenda is the embodiment of place and Malpas (1999) views the people/place relationship as 'necessarily embedded in place, and in spatialised, embodied activity' (176). For example, gender can be explored, performed or subverted within the public realm of the pub. The embodied experiences of individuals, groups and communities are embedded in everyday places and thus, the pub, and can manifest in a number of ways. Power and status, gender and other experiences of place such as identity and lifestyle are explored at length in this project.

The impact of space and place in the formation and presentation and negotiation of identities is a reoccurring theme throughout this analysis. Jacobs (1961), Cooper (1974), Massey (1994, 1995) and Yaeger (1999) have explored the relationship of place and identity and have suggested that shared spaces are crucial to community cohesion and individual and group identities through a shared sense of place. A sense of place is defined as those places that individuals and groups form intimate relationships with and become 'infused with meaning' (Rose, 1993: 88). A positive sense of place promotes emotional and mental well being through the generation of an informal sense of community and belonging. Place intimacy integrates people with place, contributing to the formation of individual and group identities in a variety of ways:

> Senses of place ... may invite identification with a place; they may establish identity by offering a contrast between the place that is 'home' and the place that is 'away'; or the meaning of a sense of place may be irrelevant to how people identify themselves. (Rose, 1993: 97)

To recapitulate, Oldenburg suggests the role of the third place is to provide continuity, regularity, a sense of place – all of which conceptually contribute to the construction of the self, the projection of the self within the public sphere and the generation of a collective identity. Using Oldenburg's definition, I have identified the pub as the archetypal third place in Ireland. However, Oldenburg has suggested that pubs and other social places are less able to provide those important services to

individuals and communities due to the changing socio-geographical landscape. Furthermore, Oldenburg (1999), as well as Watson (2002) and Urry (1995) have suggested that the changing modes of social interaction have distanced individuals from places of community through place change and the development of new spaces. Place transformation has resulted in changing relationships between people and place and as a result, has generated a number of conceptual questions. Third places, and thus the Irish pub, have been affected, as have the people who inhabit them.

People in time and place

There is a growing body of work on the experiences of people in time and space particularly in the face of increasing place change and globalisation, which has brought about a refocus on the impact of place from a number of angles. An examination of the third place within this context has, however, been minimal. While this project is located within a sociological framework, the analysis has been influenced by a number of disciplines. This chapter establishes a thematic framework in which to analyse the social geography of the pub. It provides a conceptual outline of the people/place relationship through the presentation of how people experience place and how those experiences affect thoughts, emotions and behaviours of people.

I have used a pluralistic strategy, drawing selectively from the human science spectrum to apply a number of interpretative tools of theoretical analysis. A multi-theoretical approach is applied to support each layer of analysis to form an emergent and cohesive theme. This non-linear approach looks to unearth multiple layers of interpretation and understanding. The topics progress thematically, introducing a sequence of analysis that is applied to various aspects of pub culture in order to present a more complete picture. The process of this approach requires that one become immersed, produce a different telling of the subject manner from a variety of angles and create a multi-dimensional representation to comprehend the

'sequence not sequentially, or one at a time, but rather simultaneously' (Cook, 1981: 172). This mixed approach to social research, referred to as a 'patchwork approach':

> uses the aesthetic and material tools of [the researcher's] craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand ... This patchwork approach is aligned with a similarly crafted methodological tactic, has been described by Becker (1998) as 'pragmatic, strategic, and self-reflexive.' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 2)

The interpretative practices used in such an approach involve the concept of *montage* which, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), 'create the sense that images, sounds, and understandings are blending together, overlapping, forming a composite, a new creation' (6). The montage concept is often used to describe the layered effect created through the blending of time and space in the narrative, the audio and the visual experience of cinema (Cook, 1981), but is also useful in the analysis of cultural happenings and everyday life. Similarly, Denzin (1989) proposes a strategy of theoretical sampling called 'theory triangulation' that integrates a number of resources and 'approach[es] data with multiple perspectives and hypotheses in mind' in order to build a full body of research. 'Various points of view could be placed side by side,' he suggests, 'to assess their utility and power' (239 – 240):

> The theoretical *bricoleur* reads widely and is knowledgeable about the many interpretative paradigms ... that can be brought to any particular problem. That is, one cannot easily move between paradigms as overarching philosophical systems denoting particular ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies. They represent belief systems that attach users to particular worldviews. Perspectives, in contrast, are less well developed systems, and one can more easily move between them. The researcher-as-*bricoleur*-theorist works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 9)

The use of the eclectic patchwork framework of analysis also allows the researcher the opportunity to draw from a number of theoretical and methodological approaches without becoming fully embedded. Rather, the flexibility of this approach allows the researcher to establish boundaries and put limitations on the depth to which various theories are applied.

The objective of a multi-approach method is to enrich data and to produce a more complete knowledge and understanding of social realities. The reliance on a single method of data collection and analysis, as compared to the multiple method, is seen as limiting:

> The product of the interpretative *bricoleur's* behaviour is a complex, quiltlike bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage – a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 9)

In this research, the use of the patchwork approach allowed for the emergence of a complex, rich, interwoven and multi-layered snapshot of the experience of pub culture as it has evolved and developed through time and space.

The following chapter outlines the thematic progression of analysis through the presentation of a number of aspects of the people/place relationship in an attempt to understand how individuals and communities identify and relate to pub geographies. This chapter will provide an introduction to the assessment of the pub as a third place and the changing nature of the people/place relationship through the exploration of a number of key themes. Overall, this project is structured to gain perspective on the role of the pub in the everyday and to assess the sociological significance of the pub in the lives of individuals, groups and society.

The sociology of everyday life

Understanding the notion of everyday life is a useful starting point for a discussion on the pub. By beginning in the everyday, a framework is established to examine each layer of experience of place and analyse the ways in which places affect the day-to-day lives of individuals.

One of the earliest sociological explorations into the everyday was initiated by Mass Observation, an extensive ethnographic study in Britain in the late 1930s that

employed a team of observers under the direction of Tom Harrison and Charles Madge. In the undertaking of this large-scale project, Harrison and Madge attempted to observe and record the everyday lives of the people of Britain:

> Fifty people in different parts of the country agreed to co-operate in making observations on how they and other people spend their daily lives. These fifty Observers were the vanguard of a developing movement, aiming to apply the methods of science to the complexity of modern culture.... One aim of Mass Observation is to see how, and how far, the individual is linked up with society and its institutions. (in Watson, 2002: 192)

Although considerable criticism of Mass Observation has emerged concerning the biased nature of the methodology and data analysis,[5] important sociological findings did emerge. One of the resulting ethnographies, *The Pub and the People* (1943) is particularly interesting to this project as it explores people situated within the everyday and includes detailed observations of pub space. The research findings provided rich descriptions of day-to-day life as a member of urban working class Britain. In the research, the public house was found to be central to the social lives of men in the community. Perhaps most significantly, the observations demonstrated that the public house was essential as an informal semi-public space among the working class community. Harrison and Madge (1943) identified the pub as a place that provided a safe and familiar setting for the members of the working class and functioned to casually re-enforce the values and norms of this population. The public house had neither the hierarchical formality of the workplace nor the role division of the domestic, but at the time reflected the everyday [masculinised] lives of the working class British.

Similar to the community pub of 1930s Britain, the centrality of the public house in the everyday lives of contemporary Irish communities is sociologically significant. The sheer volume of pubs in Ireland alone highlights the social importance of this unique institution. In 2004 there were just under 11,500 fully licensed pubs, clubs and bars in the Republic of Ireland (Foley, 2004) with a population of just over 4.2

[5] For a critique of the methods used in this research, see Watson (2002) pp. 194 – 195 and Hey's (1986) chapter entitled 'Masculinities and Mass Observation,' pp. 39 - 60.

million, an estimated one pub for every 365 woman, man and child (CSO, 2006). However, although the topic of alcohol consumption has been extensively analysed within the Irish context, the pub itself has had relatively few academic investigations. Throughout the extensive ethnographic study *Family and Community in Ireland*, for example, anthropologists Arensberg and Kimball (1940) mentioned the pub in terms of a geographical setting in which social ritual takes place. While they included extensive discussions on the more extraordinary processes and events that took place in the pub such as market negotiations and matchmaking, they tended to overlook everyday uses. More recent publications such as those by Molloy (2002) and Kearns (1996) exclusively discuss the Irish pub from a historical stance, albeit from a popularised, largely nostalgic perspective.

The central role of the Irish pub in the everyday lives of individuals suggests a compelling explanation for the absence of discourse concerning this pivotal institution. As the pub has been integrated into the everyday, its existence is relatively unquestioned and taken-for-granted. It is the elusiveness of the everyday that often results in it being overlooked:

> Everyday life is the most self-evident, yet the most puzzling of ideas ... everyday life simply *is*, indisputably: the essential taken-for-granted continuum of mundane activities that frames our forays into the more esoteric and exotic worlds. It is the ultimate, non-negotiable reality; the unavoidable basis for all other forms of human endeavour.... At first glance everyday life seems to be everywhere, yet nowhere. Because it has no clear boundaries it is difficult to identify.... Everyday life is synonymous with the habitual, the ordinary, the mundane ... (Felski, 1999/2000: 15)

Watson, in her exploration of the habitual nature of everyday life, finds it is 'precisely about these ... routine, self-evident, ordinary and mundane aspects of life, which we generally take for granted and do not ask critical questions about' (2002: 189). In the application of this analysis to the public house, she outlines several central characteristics of this unique site - repetition, home place and habit:

> visiting the 'local' is, in part, about regularity and repetition. One aspect of ... personal and social identities is as a 'regular' in the 'local', as a 'friend of the landlord', or as 'the most regular of all regulars' in this complex activity space. Repetition is one of the strategies through which they, as individuals, organise

> and make sense of the world; it is also central to the formation and maintenance of their identities. (Watson, 2002: 188 – 189)

Similarly, Massey (2003) provides a geographical description of human movement and interaction within a locality. She defines this fluid movement through the landscape as 'activity space' which consists of the 'spatial network of links and activities, of spatial connections and of locations, within which a particular agent operates' (54).

Re-visiting sites within a personal geography creates habits and habitats for individuals and communities. Bourdieu's (1984) concept of '*habitus*', described as a system of unconscious knowledges and behaviours that are acquired through the continuous engagement of a lived environment, is useful in understanding how people embody place. It is through the informal everyday acts and social interactions that a conceptual understanding of the world is experience and created. The shared experience of the local geography and the subsequent habitual relationships and encounters that occur from its inhabitation link individuals to produce informal connections. A shared *habitus* indicates place belonging and group membership. Through the experience of diverse place-bound social networks, geographies of the everyday provide residents with secure spaces in which to participate in a variety of meaningful encounters and discourses. Everyday life provides people with an informal means to foster individual and communal identities through the knowing of place and in the relating of place experience to a sense of self. This is evident in a place such as the pub, which functions as a 'habitat of meaning' (Hannerz, 1996) for the regular occupants. Regulars move through the space of the pub with ease and confidence, establish intimacy with the physical environment and settle particular locations within the pub geography.

Social capital and place

As the public house is often a location for everyday life in Ireland, it provides an ideal setting for the formation and maintenance of 'social capital'. Social economist Fukuyama defines social capital as 'an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between two or more individuals' (1999). In effect, social capital is a tool that is used for the formation of co-operative relationships among the members of a society. Social capital comprises of developed relationships between individuals and groups and produces an informal web of social networks based within everyday life. Social capital is characterised by an implicit collective value that is awarded to these webs of social relationships that compel individuals to reciprocate gestures within the network systems.

Proponents of social capital maintain that the products of co-operative relationships and their resulting networks are essential components in the formation, development and maintenance of social cohesion on both a micro and macro level of community life. Sociologist Robert Putnam, whose research into social capital is explored in *Bowling Alone* (2000), notes:

> social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called 'civic virtue'. The difference is that social capital calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital. (19)

Functioning, co-operative and co-ordinated relationships are significant and beneficial for individuals and for the community as a whole. Sociologist Claude Fischler (1977) believes that '[s]ocial networks are important in all our lives, often for finding jobs, more often for finding a helping hand, companionship, or shoulder to cry on' (19). In the ethnographic study 'The Regular,' Katovich and Reese (1987) describe how social capital can provide networks that facilitate membership into a local community institution - the urban, neighbourhood bar. Katovich and Reese's bar provides clear examples of social capital at work and demonstrates how social support, a sense of belonging, access to insider information and valuable

social networks are founded within the everyday life of a community. In this case, social capital is place-bound and linked to individual and group identities as pub attendees become pub members. Typically, the primary means of gaining membership to this institution is through a connection with an established regular, what Katovich and Reese refer to as a 'ride' (1987: 321 – 322). As a result, the interactions and relationships formed in the everyday life of the community (social capital) are necessary to gain access to a significant and useful social network (the regulars at the neighbourhood bar) and ultimately access to greater social capital.

According to Putnam, social capital operates in number of ways. Firstly, social capital provides a system to disseminate information effectively and efficiently. It provides a forum for ideas and information to be shared among members of a network, for example, discovering employment opportunities, finding out about election candidates, discovering property or services for rent or sale, or obtaining advice. In describing the information flow from these social networks, Putnam notes:

> One pervasive stratagem of the ambitious job seeker is 'networking,' for most of us get our jobs because of who we know, not what we know – that is, our social capital, not our human capital. (2000: 20)

The flow of social capital also establishes a model of reciprocity. Fukuyama identifies this phenomenon as the 'norms of reciprocity' and maintains that is the basis of social cohesion (1999). The model of reciprocity is based on the idea that '[n]etworks involve (almost by definition) mutual obligation; they are not interesting as mere 'contacts' (Putnam, 2000: 20). Putnam comments that '[a] society characterised by generalised reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society.... Trustworthiness lubricates social life' (2000: 21). Similarly, Fukuyama argues that layers of trusting and reciprocal relationships are necessary for the production of social capital:

> All groups embodying social capital have a certain radius of trust, that is, the circle of people among whom cooperative norms are operative. If a group's social capital produces positive externalities, the radius of trust can be larger than the group itself.... A modern society may be thought of as a series of concentric and overlapping radii of trust. (1999)

It has been suggested that reciprocity is most effective and beneficial in a society where there is a basic trust that others will act in good will. The reciprocity theory argues against the commonly held belief that citizens will only respond positively and agree to participate in activities that benefit the collective if they are individually encouraged by 'material incentives in the form of either subsidies or penalties' (Kahan, 2002). According to researcher of law at Yale University David Kahan (2002), people frequently act in the best interests of the community and subsequently agree to collective action if they sincerely believe that the majority will participate as well. This perhaps explains the relative ease at which the smoking ban took effect in Ireland while other regulatory laws have largely failed to ensure observance, such as the recent traffic legislation which includes the point system and campaigns condemning poor driving. According to this theory, if the public does not believe that the majority of the population will, for example, abide by traffic laws and trust that the laws will be enforced, overall changes in driving behaviours will not occur:

> Promoting trust - in the form of reason to believe that fellow citizens are contributing their fair share - is thus a potential alternative to costly incentive schemes for solving societal collective action problems. (Kahan, 2002)

For this reason, populations that yield high levels of social capital are more inclined to voluntarily participate in collective action that will benefit the overall community.

The trusting relationships that are essential for the production of social capital are achieved through a combination of relationship/behavioural activities that can be describes as either 'bonding' networks or 'bridging' networks. Putnam describes bonding relationships as those that are exclusive and are 'good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity' (2000: 22). Bonding networks refer to in-groups that intimately work together in order to maintain a sustainable, functioning community. Bonding relationships are crucial in the building of community life and providing groups as well as individuals with a sense of place

and identity. Bridging networks are inclusive and enable individuals from different in-groups to explore broader concepts of identity and participate in generalised reciprocity. Bridging provides a basis for individuals and groups to transcend various social divisions for a greater social purpose. Bridging also facilitates collective action which can, in effect, produce new relationships and networks. Putnam observes that '[b]onding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40' (2000: 23). Both bridging and bonding networks are necessary to optimise social cohesion and encourage collective action, promote solidarity and broaden the identities of group members to encompass a group mentality. Consequently, the production of social capital is typically allied with social norms and is based within a standard moral framework:

> not just any set of instantiated norms constitutes social capital; they must lead to cooperation in groups and therefore are related to traditional virtues like honesty, the keeping of commitments, reliable performance of duties, reciprocity, and the like. (Fukuyama, 1999)

The presence of strong social capital bonds contributes to and is informed by, in a cyclical and interdependent manner, the development of societal values, civic discourse and institutional structure:

> The broadest and most encompassing view of social capital includes the social and political environment that shapes social structure and enables norms to develop. This analysis extends the importance of social capital to the most formalised institutional relationships and structures, such as government, the political regime, the rule of law, the court system, and civil and political liberties. This view not only accounts for the virtues and vices of social capital, and the importance of forging ties within and across communities, but recognises that the capacity of various social groups to act in their interest depends crucially on the support (or lack thereof) that they receive from the state as well as the private sector. Similarly, the state depends on social stability and widespread popular support. In short, economic and social development thrives when representatives of the state, the corporate sector, and civil society create forums in and through which they can identify and pursue common goals. (Fukuyama, 1999)

Some bonding networks may base group membership on discourses of exclusion or hostility towards others in order to achieve in-group cohesion. Briggs (1997) and

Portes and Landholt (1996) argue that negative and destructive cultural values may be integrated into social relationships that will extend out into the wider network. This can include discourses of racism or sexism, and can facilitate anti-social behaviour among individuals and groups who reinforce their values through exclusive co-operative relationships. This can be observed, for example, in urban gangs, racist organisations and political movements that manipulate individuals through the use of bonding networks in order to work against the collective interests of the larger society. Putnam admits that '[n]etworks and the associated norms of reciprocity are generally good for those inside the network, but the external effects of social capital are by no means always positive' (2000: 21). Similarly, Fukuyama notes that 'group solidarity in human communities is often purchased at the price of hostility towards out-group members' (1999). He acknowledges that 'a natural human proclivity for dividing the world into friends and enemies ... is the basis of all politics' (1999).

The reciprocal nature of social capital and the social infrastructure in which it is linked is of a complex nature. Fukuyama has written extensively on the impact of social capital on economics and argues that societies that have achieved high levels of social capital will ultimately reduce institutional bureaucracy by providing improved 'informal coordination mechanisms' (1999). Putnam also believes that 'social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable' (2000: 325). He claims that 'a well-connected individual in a poorly-connected society is not as productive as a well-connected individual in a well-connected society' (2000: 20). Furthermore, social capital has the ability to influence and shape political environments and many social scientists maintain that high levels of social capital are essential for the maintenance of a healthy democracy.

To summarise, the many layers of social networks have intrinsic value for individual citizens, communities and societies. The importance of social capital arises from the advantages gained through relationships and the subsequent

networks that extend forth to generally benefit large numbers of people and contribute to the better functioning of social institutions and society. Increased levels of social capital among citizens promote higher levels of trust, and as a result, a more efficient and better co-ordinated society for both the individual and the collective.

The social experience of place

Crucial to the construction and maintenance of social capital are the places in which human networks are situated. Place is an essential component in the experience of the everyday and a site for valuable social connections to form. Fundamental to the construction and maintenance of social capital, a sense of place provides individuals with security and familiarity in which to comfortably build an assortment of relationships. While place has a number of definitions and can refer to geography, position, location, landscape or social status, a sense of place suggests a complexity of intimate relationships with real and imagined environments.[6] A shared sense of place gives meaning to both the natural and built landscape and, according to philosopher Ronald Hepburn (2001) who discusses place in 'Knowing (aesthetically) where I am':

> marks a set of complex and distinctive human *interactions* with our large or small scale environments: we are by no means mere object observers; our sense of self and subjectivity are involved. (1)

More recently, social theorists have acknowledged the essential role of space and place in the construction of social histories and cultural identities. Critical theorists have identified the integration of time/space discussions as central to the exploration of contemporary social narrative and discourse. Edward Soja (1996,

[6] Bachelard's (1994) notion of the 'imagination of place,' in which he describes how place remains a part of the individual's internal sense of self, can also be used to explore the experience of the Irish pub. In this, memory and imagination 'constitute a community of memory and image' in regards to place (5). The role of imagination in creating space (Bachelard, 1994; Appadurai, 1997) will be explored in chapter six in the discussion on diaspora tourism and the pub as a representation of an imagined homeland.

2003), whose analysis of postmodern places is useful in the exploration of the modernisation of the pub, has noted:

> The material and intellectual contexts of modern critical social theory have begun to shift dramatically. In the 1980s, the hoary traditions of a space-blinkered historicism are being challenged with unprecedented explicitness by convergent calls for a far-reaching spatialization of the critical imagination. A distinctively post-modern and critical human geography is taking shape, brashly reasserting the interpretative confines of contemporary critical thought. Geography may not yet have displaced history at the heart of the contemporary theory and criticism, but there is a new animating polemic on the theoretical and political agenda, one which rings with significantly different ways of seeing time and space together, the interplay of history and geography, the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' dimensions of being in the world freed from the imposition of inherent categorical privilege. (2003: 11)

Michel Foucault, for whom the time/space concept was largely neglected until his later writings, discussed place over the course of two notable interviews, 'Questions on Geography' (1980) and 'Space, Knowledge, and Power' (Rabinow, 1984), and in the article entitled 'Of other spaces' (1986). Foucault describes the relationship between place and the individual as 'external space' – those spaces that are identified spatially, that are inhabited and that humans award meaning to (1986). Within this proposed framework, place is understood as a subjective concept that transforms over time. Place is socially constructed through the relationship that arises as a part of the inhabitation of geography and the meaning awarded to those on-going interactions:

> The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposed on one another. (1986: 23)

The conceptualisation of place as a constantly shifting construction helps to identify human geographies as significant areas of social understanding, yet the recognition of place *contributing to* and *informing* the human experience has not been widely explored within a social science framework until recently. However, evidence suggests that place affects individual experience and behaviour, 'including,

startlingly, whether [people] feel that they are allowed to interact with one another and with their surroundings, and whether they will assume responsibility for maintaining some part of the places they use' (Hiss, 1991: 90). As a result, researchers from across the disciplines have started to explore place as central to human experience:

> place, by virtue of its unencompassability by anything other than itself, is at once the limit and the condition of all that exists ... place serves as the *condition* of all existing things.... To be is to be in place. (Casey, 1993: 15 - 16)

Geographer Edward Relph (1976) identifies place as embodying more than mere functional locality and ascertains that 'the essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centres of human existence' (43). For example, the role of the pub within Irish communities has been central for generations. Individuals and groups form relationships with preferred pubs, often relying extensively on the pub place as a primary site of social interaction, networking and general day-to-day living. Over the course of my observations, I found that communities do indeed contribute to the formation of place, however, the place of the pub also informs its inhabitants on a number of levels. Similarly, Relph contends that an intimate relationship exists between place and the inhabiting community and claims 'people are their place and a place is its people' (1976: 34). He concludes that place is not merely a neutral geographical setting for human activity, but instead an environment of importance where everyday life is experienced and awarded with meaning. This experience of place and the affects of place on the individual are themes that are explored throughout this research from a number of perspectives.

Place obtains its meanings through the interaction of social discourse and the experience of geography. Using a structuralist approach, John Agnew (1987) identifies place as comprising of several elements: 'locale, location and sense of place ... [H]e argues that place is defined as a geographical context or locality in which agency interpolates social structure' (Kuusisto, 1999). This interaction generates a sense of belonging and attachment that becomes more specified and

intense the closer one approaches, both conceptually and physically, a location of familiarity (for example: the West, Europe, Ireland, the North West, County Sligo, west Sligo, rural, Maugherow, Ballinfull, etc.).

Through this emotional attachment place is identified, claimed, nurtured and a sense of place emerges. In *Living in the Landscape* (1997), geographer Arnold Berleant discusses the sense of belonging and intimacy that develops between individuals and place and notes: 'When a sense of place is most satisfying, I shall *feel at home* in the setting – my aims are not thwarted or belittled, but enhanced and furthered' (2). Similarly, Hiss remarks that a sense of place can be identified by the individual experience of comfort: 'whether it provides richness of information reaching all the senses, and whether there is an absence of alarm signals' (1999: 28).

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1994) described how humans create intimate spaces to express and experience 'the topography[7] of our intimate being' which he describes as the 'poetics of space' (*xxxvi*). Bachelard's discussion of the intimate relationship between the home place and the individual resonates with the sense of place that individuals report within the pubs they frequent and the pub places that are claimed by regulars. Bachelard notes that 'all inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home' (1994: 5) and like the home place, places such as the pub provide intimacy, familiarity and in many cases act as a home from home. In this, Bachelard asserts that in the examination of the visuality, structure and sense of place within the domestic, 'there is ground for taking the house as a *tool for analysis* of the human soul' (1994: *xxxvii*). In a similar manner this thesis attempts to use the pub for the exploration of the relationship that forms between people and place and place and people.

[7] 'Topoanalysis ... would be the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives' (Bachelard, 1994: 8).

A shared language of place is one indication of a collective sense of place. In Ireland, the shared language of the locale often includes the pub places within the community. It is common, for example, when asking for directions in Ireland to hear particular pubs as reference points and landmarks, indicating an internal mapping of community that incorporates places of the everyday. This is especially true of rural geographies, which also include a shared folk history, often repeated and reinforced in the place of the pub. This integration of a shared sense of place and a common history generate a layered affect of time and space and produces an intimacy between individuals, communities and landscape. Knowledge of place names and a shared language of the landscape help to nurture an intimacy between the land and its inhabitants and bring about a greater sense of social solidarity within the locale. Architect Murray Silverstein (1977), in *A Pattern Language*, describes the language of place as one made of spatial patterns that are linked in a characteristic and understood way. Jeff Malpas (2006), in his exploration of place experience, uses a number of metaphors that he describes as 'a saying of place' in an attempt to create a language to describe our relationship with those places that we relate to intimately (33).

The language of place, the development of a *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984), participation in place-based social networks, a shared sense of place – these experiences are also linked to concepts of territoriality and power. Individuals and groups claim places as their own due to perceived connections (a sense of belonging, emotional attachments, 'habitats of meaning,' etc.) to specific landscapes. Indeed, place is defined, in part, by specific set of social relations that incorporate power dynamics. While the pub, for example, can be inviting and inclusive, it can also act as a territory that excludes and rejects outsiders (Curtin and Ryan, 1989; Campbell and Philips, 1995). Membership is established through an unconscious knowledge of *habitus*. The work of Spradley and Mann (1975), who explore the claiming of place through the experiences of a cocktail waitress, argue that 'always we live under the territorial imperative: to give meaning to space, to define the places of our lives, large and small, in cultural terms' (101).

In his on-going exploration of power and knowledge, Foucault noted that '[a] whole history remains to be written of *spaces* – which would at the same time be the history of *powers* – from the great strategies of the geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat' (in Crampton and Elden, 2007: 45). In a discussion on hegemonic definitions of time/space, Foucault argued that place has been largely conceptualised as static, or 'the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile' (1980: 70). Time and history, on the other hand, have been presented as supple, malleable and easily constructed by authoritative power. Upon this realisation, Foucault asserted that exploring the multi-layered effects of space and place, as opposed to a linear approach, was germane to the interpretation of contemporary discourse:

> The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We at the moment ... when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a *network that connects and points and intersects its own skein.* (1986: 22)

The interdependence of power and place, as explored by Foucault, can be applied to the analysis of pub places on a number of levels. Discourses of power and resistance can inform the construction of places that are inclusive or exclusive to particular social networks. Chapter three and four describe how the place of the pub has emerged, in part, as a site of resistance in response to various hegemonic structures. The pub has played host to a number of social networks who converged in resistance[8] to, for example, colonial authority, Catholic fundamentalism (Inglis, 1998, 2003), family hierarchy (Inglis, 1998; Pittman, 1967) and gendered places (Stivers, 2002; Curtin and Ryan, 1989). Yet pubs in Ireland have also developed in response to specific sets of power relations found within Irish society. The development of the pub as a male domain is one example of gender hegemonies that are embedded within social place.

[8] Sites of resistance may be overt or covert and the participants conscious or unconscious of the their role in subversion.

Identity and place intimacy

Over the course of this research informants frequently articulated emotional attachments to places, albeit with some difficulty, which were often intertwined with a sense of place and an identity of the self. A strong connection to place occurs in which an emotional and visceral intimacy is felt and through which persons, environments and identities become inextricably entwined. Emotions often become manifested in behaviours that are based within place, resulting in an intrinsic link between emotional experience, the claiming of place and identity. The experience of emotional geographies, whether everyday or extraordinary, is integral to the formation of a sense of place and a sense of self.

Emotional geographies can be understood as internalised socio-spatial experiences that suggest a conceptual relationship that individuals and groups have towards a particular place. Place and representations of place can mobilise powerful emotional responses in individuals and groups and are illustrated in the celebration of both the real and imagined homeland of diasporic communities. The challenge of this research was to explore those subjective and often un-represented experiences of place, enactments within place and encounters with the geographies of the everyday that inform and define who people are.

Intimacy is often seen as a positive and even necessary relationship that arises in relation to space, emotional links to the landscape can often lead to territoriality and the creation of exclusive sites restrictive to particular social networks. In this, place is intrinsically related to expressions of discourse and power as it can provide settings in which power can be explored, enacted and/or subverted. For example, place provides an environment in which to develop and interpret meaning. John Fiske's (1987) ethnographic study of a public house in Australia determined that the pub is a created space that has been awarded meaning, yet also creates a new set of meanings for its inhabitants. Fiske notes that the:

> pub is a building, but more importantly it is a category of place, organised as one of a set of 'domains'. A domain in this sense is not simply a physical

> location. It is a social space, organised by a set of rules which specify who can be in it and what they can do. It also controls meanings: what meanings can be expressed and how they will be interpreted. (1987: 5)

A sense of place, while experienced and understood by individuals, has been a difficult concept to articulate and analyse. As evidenced during my own fieldwork, describing and quantifying the intimate and layered relationship between people and place can be challenging. Research participants grappled to articulate their personal sense of atmosphere, mood, feelings and visceral experiences of their environments. Abstract concepts such as place intimacy, a sense of self, collective identities and expressions of power were complex areas to explore. While evocative descriptions of the emotional, cognitive and sensory effect of environment, habitat and place are firmly embedded in the arts, an academic framework for the understanding of a sense of place has been largely unexplored. However, academics and researchers from a variety of disciplines, including social geographers and psychogeographers, phenomenologists, sociologists, environment behaviourists and psychologists, have attempted to understand the emotional, conceptual, psychological and visceral relationship between people and places.

Because of the focus on place experience, phenomenological understandings of space and place, which focus on the exploration and analysis of geography through the sensory, intellectual and emotional experiences of individuals, are helpful in the understanding of this topic.[9] Phenomenological theorists such as Heidegger (1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1962) proposed that human experience within the world of everyday life could be identified, described and analysed. This approach recognises the relationship that individuals experience when they inhabit place and indicates the significance of place in the formation of identities.

[9] Similarly, psychogeography sets out to discover and observe the effects of place on the individual. Psychogeographers, however, employ research methods such as 'drifting', in which the researcher acts as flâneur, typically in an urban setting. The role of the psychogeographer is to detect and describe, through experience, the perceived atmospheres, moods and aesthetics generated by the environment.

As part of the everyday the pub provides a unique opportunity to explore the relationship that develops between people and place. The human experience of the place of the pub is crucial to understanding the central position of the pub within the everyday. While this research is not a phenomenological exploration of the pub, phenomenology provides a framework in which to identify and better articulate experiences of geography. Therefore I will selectively draw on themes of phenomenology to inform the analysis of the experience of pub places. I will also discuss the relationship of place, particularly that of the pub and the formation of individual and social identities through the pub experience.

Being-in-world

Phenomenology has emerged as a multi-disciplinary mechanism for the interpretation and analysis of the human experience of place[10], as it 'spontaneously occur[s] in the course of daily life' (von Eckartsberg, 1998: 3). David Seamon (2000), phenomenological architect and editor of the *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter*, neatly summarises the basic concept of the phenomenological movement:

> I ... define phenomenology as the exploration and description of phenomena, where *phenomena* refers to things or experiences as human beings experience them. Any object, event, situation or experience that a person can see, hear, touch, smell, taste, feel, intuit, know, understand, or live through is a legitimate topic for phenomenological investigation. There can be a phenomenology of light, of colour, of architecture, of landscape, of place, of home, of travel, of seeing, of learning, of blindness, of jealousy, of change, of relationship, of friendship, of power, of economy, of sociability, and so forth. All of these things are phenomena because human beings can experience, encounter, or live through them in some way. (Seamon, 2000)

This philosophical approach to examining the individual within the social world attempts to connect agency to place and locate the individual experience of the everyday. Place is, according to phenomenological philosopher Malpas:

[10] Phenomenology has more recently been integrated into a number of academic and professional works that have been applied to this research, including geography (Seamon, 1997), anthropology (Jackson, 1996) and social sciences (Rosenau, 1992).

> that open, cleared yet bounded region in which we find ourselves gathered together with other persons and things, and in which we are opened up to the world and the world to us. (2006: 221)

This perspective seeks to explore meaning through a variety of individual/place experiences and encounters that include emotional, intuitive and visceral affects and sensations. Discovering the commonalties in these human experiences - the shared phenomena or shared sense of place - are ultimately what phenomenological researchers attempt to explore and describe:

> In other words, the phenomenologist *pays attention* to specific instances of the phenomenon with the hope that these instances, in time, will point toward more general qualities and characteristics that accurately describe the essential nature of the phenomenon as it has presence and meaning in the concrete lives and experiences of human beings. (Denton, 1991)

A defining principle in phenomenological theory, proposed in Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1962), is that the individual is immersed and integrated within their environment, creating a holistic relationship of 'undissolvable unity' (Stewart and Mickunas, 1990: 9). Malpas argues that:

> place is *at the root of* Heidegger' s philosophy of being. Being and place are inextricably bound together in that being emerges only through place; and place, through being. (in Relph, 2008: 6)

In this Heideggerian understanding, a sense of place is not a consciously understood object/subject relationship, an abstraction of constructed ideas projected onto the landscape, nor simply a casual relationship between the locale and individual:

> in finding ourselves in the world, we find ourselves already in place. Place is not just a bit of space or a function of affectivity and is certainly more than a node in social networks. Place is neither something subjective and claimed by feelings, nor is it objective location. In fact, it precedes all notions of subjectivity and objectivity. It is a complex unity, integral to being, and encountered experientially as simultaneously unified, differentiated from yet connected with other places, and gathering together things, people, and our own lives. (Relph, 2008: 9)

Within the phenomenological approach, lifeworld, as related to the sociological concept of the everyday, involves the daily, routine aspects of day-to-day living as it is based within the geography of the familiar. Typically unnoticed, out of sight, and taken for granted, the lifeworld provides the basic context in which individuals and communities live. The lifeworld includes those experiences that pass by unnoticed and those that are extraordinary:

> The *natural attitude* is the term which ... identifies the corresponding inner situation whereby the person takes the everyday world for granted and assumes it to be only what it is. In this mode of attention and awareness, people accept the lifeworld unquestioningly and rarely consider that it might be otherwise. The natural attitude and lifeworld reflect, respectively ... *that people are immersed in a world that normally unfolds automatically.* (Denton, 1991)

Phenomenology argues that space is typically understood as an embodiment - the phenomenon of space and place are experienced, they are felt before they are consciously or intellectually understood. Merleau-Ponty explored place through the experience of embodiment - the unconscious bodily experience of moving through space that includes movement, gesture, routine and the sensory experience. Casey (1993), drawing on Merleau-Ponty, believes that we are 'bound by body to be in place' (104). The experience of a lived environment generates patterns of movement and often leads to physical relatedness to the geography. This *habitus* includes those knowledges that are acquired through the unconscious physical and mental negotiation of environments of familiarity. Individualised visceral and mental mapping is composed over a lifetime of being in a lifeworld and creates an intimacy with the landscape that is often unconscious and automatic.

This interpretation is key to the exploration into how individuals relate to place and how a shared sense of place can lead to group and community cohesion. Seamon's (1997, 2000) explorations of the environment-behavioural and phenomenological notions of lifeworld and place are germane to understanding the environment in which the pub has emerged, and according to Denton, are significant because:

> each refers to a phenomenon that, in its very constitution, holds people and world always together and also says much about the physical, spatial, and environmental aspects of human life and events. (1991)

Spaces that are highlighted in the lifeworld, such as the home place or public places, are significant sites of understanding. The Irish pub is such a place and as a result is a useful mechanism in the exploration of the people/place relationship. Furthermore, through the application of diverse understandings of place in the investigation of the pub, a better understanding can be obtained of pub places, culture and inhabitants.

The experience of everyday places

Public space is significant in the everyday lives of community members and essential for the on-going production of social capital. As previously noted, social life is situated in place and quality public spaces are needed for public life to successfully occur. Oldenburg claims that that all 'great cultures' have 'a vital informal public life' (1999: *ix*), and in his seminal text, *The Great Good Place*, Oldenburg discusses the importance of the public arena to the informal lifeworld of community. He resolutely asserts that 'the most important purpose or function served by informal public gathering places cannot be supplied by any other agencies in society' (1999: *ix*).

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) Jane Jacobs argued that public spaces and public streets in particular are central to a thriving society. Impromptu encounters with friends, acquaintances and strangers in interesting and diverse public spaces, according to Jacobs, promote social vitality. An optimally built environment that promotes diverse and spontaneous public interactions and busy, interactive and stimulating social experiences will often result in a favourable community life.

Similarly, in *A New Theory of Urban Design* (1987) architect Christopher Alexander explores the components of successful urban places. In his discussion he highlights the importance of public places and the generation of social capital within community settings. The production of social capital, which can be observed in his discussion of the collaborative process of urban growth and development, includes place-making

policies, but also involves the synergistic relationship of people and place. This holistic approach to urban development includes the nurturing of community-based initiatives and encourages the integration of individuals into place. Alexander ultimately concludes that urban renewal emerges from material changes in the environment. However, his argument that community discourse and civic participation are of central importance to social regeneration suggests, like Jacobs, an irrefutable link between people and place. In his writings, Alexander proposes a number of key characteristics for the creation of successful urban places that highlight the public sphere, including the production of small and distinctive neighbourhoods, busy streetscapes, diversity and, crucially, informal and spontaneous human interaction in public spaces. Alexander's proposed methods of creating successful urban spaces rely on the generation of social capital in order to strengthen city places, resulting in the identification of individuals with a communal geography.

In *The Good City and the Good Life* (1995) Kemmis describes what he terms 'The Good Life,' which 'makes it possible for humans to be fully present - to themselves, to one another and to their surroundings. Such presence is precisely the opposite of distractedness' (1995: 22). In his discussion of 'The Good Life' Kemmis argues that interdependent relationships emerge between people and the places that they inhabit. In this union, a successful place begets successfully functioning individuals, families and communities. Individuals, Kemmis argues, 'cannot be fully healthy, physically and mentally, in isolation, but only as meaningful players in a meaningful community' (1995: 152).

While focusing exclusively on urban living, Kemmis argues that people and place are intrinsically connected and asserts that 'urban wholeness' results in improved civic participation and social capital. He notes: 'The refocusing of human energy around the organic wholeness of cities, promises a profound rehumanizing of the shape and condition of our lives' (1995: 151). For this relationship to form, he argues, a sense of place must be developed so that the inhabitants' experience of community generates a collective sense of place and belonging.

Drawing on Heidegger's *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1971), Kemmis argues that political, economic, and social capital are strongly linked to the human geography and a shared sense of place. Using the example of a farmer's market Kemmis describes how a community-based opportunity to generate economic capital also results in the production of social capital. The public aspect of the farmer's market allows a diverse combination of individuals from the community to informally gather and socialise, which 'enables people to come away from the market more whole than when they arrived' (1971, 11).

Although the works of Alexander, Jacobs and Kemmis have emerged from various disciplines and perspectives, they have each determined that it is the interplay of the physical *and* the social environment that is necessary for successful place making. Importantly, the quality of the built environment contributes to the success or failure of place. It is this combination of a unique material culture (the quality of built interior and exterior spaces; the presence of features that encourage sociability, comfort, and diversity; the positioning of distinctive places; etc.) and the presence of thriving social networks that have made the pub a successful place in Irish culture and will be explored further in this research.

The 'Third Place'

Oldenburg supports the argument that place is crucial to individual and social well being. His analysis of social life has extended beyond the exploration of public spaces to where he has identified a unique type of place that is exceptionally conducive to forming diverse relationships of bonding and bridging social networks. He differentiates between private/domestic space, work place and public/semi-public informal spaces that he terms 'third places', which he identifies as optimal sites of community solidarity and belonging. The distinctive third place, he notes, typically facilitates relaxation, pleasure and comfort:

> The examples set by societies that have solved the problem of place and those set by the small towns and vital neighbourhoods of our past suggest that daily

> life, in order to be relaxed and fulfilling, must find its balance in three realms of experience. One is domestic, a second is gainful or productive, and the third is inclusively sociable, offering both the basis of community and the celebration of it. Each of these realms of human experience is built on associations and relationships appropriate to it; each has its own physically separate and distinct places; each must have its measure of autonomy from the others. (Oldenburg, 1999: 14 - 15)

According to Oldenburg, what uniquely characterises the third place from home and work is that it provides the citizens of a community with the opportunity to position themselves, as well as the lives of their fellow citizens, within a social context that appears informal and neutral. Most important to the third place is that one feels welcome and comfortable. Using the example of the English pub, Oldenburg notes:

> People go to pubs because they want to feel welcome. They appreciate a welcome more warm and personable than that extended by the grocer or bank manager. In the better and more serviceable pubs, and licensee is as much friend as tradesperson. People like to feel at home and in no way must the customer be made to feel out of place. The social drinker likes to give and enjoy friendliness. Above all, fellowship must prevail and it depends most upon informality. Snugness, not smugness, is the key if one is to feel the nearness of human company. (1999: 125)

Oldenburg has recognised a number of characteristics by which to identify third places and includes for example, low profile and in the everyday, informality, inclusiveness, equality, locality, novelty and diversity. Third places provide the members of a community with public sites of social interaction, neutral gathering places for diverse interaction, a political and intellectual forum, leisure and pleasure and often a degree of social care for community members (which may include financial, emotional, psychological, etc., needs). In Ireland, I found the pub to be an intrinsic part of the everyday geography and an essential component in the lifeworld of many individuals, groups and communities. Yet Oldenburg, in his discussion of drinking houses, is careful to demonstrate that the benefits of this third place are largely unconscious and based purely on the advantages of that particular people/place experience:

> Amid this lengthy enumeration of third place functions, it may be well to point out that the fundamental motivation for this kind of belonging is neither

> personal advantage nor civic duty. The basic motivation; that which draws people back time and again is *fun*. (Oldenburg, 1999: *xxii*)

Fig. 2 Fun for young and old.

Oldenburg believes the habitual use of the third place occurs as a result of an intimacy that develops between people and place:

> when the good citizens of a community find places to spend pleasurable hours with one another for no specific or obvious purpose, there *is* purpose to the association. (Oldenburg, 1999: *ix*)

A genuine third place is described by Oldenburg as being both inclusive and neutral and working as a sort of 'mixer' or 'leveller'; breaking down prescribed social hegemonies that are found within the work place or in public life (1999: *xviii*). Individuals often feel 'at home' in a genuine third place because they are less restricted by self-surveillance and the surveillance of others - the boss, the family, etc. - and the more rigid social roles have restricted access into this institution. The third place's unique ability to integrate and equalise was recognised by Australian sociologist John Fiske in his ethnographic observations of the *Birdwatchers' Bar* (1987):

> relationships with mates is a continuation of the unsatisfactory relations with others in the workplace, but transformed under better conditions [in the pub].

> If the 'boss' joins the 'the boys' [sic] at the pub it is now as an equal (almost) and as a mate, sharing a common male [sic] humanity. From these two relationships the pub gains its double character, as an anti-home and an anti-workplace. (6)

From his observations, Fiske determined that:

> the role of the pub world [is] a kind of anti-world, a bracketed space where the normative relationships of the real world were suspended or inverted, though only temporarily. Its cultural function was to achieve that status and to control it; to limit it in place (the pub, not the home or workplace, or anywhere else) and time. (1987: 3)

Not only can the third place break down social hierarchies, but the alliance of effective material spaces and successful public places also provide an informally inclusive setting in which building and bridging networks can be established. As the third place facilitates the development of social capital by providing neutral space for community members, it draws in a diverse grouping of individuals. As a result, a cyclical effect occurs as the third place increasingly harbours a variety of individuals who help to increase the availability of social capital, further promoting the third place as a site of diversity:

> Third places ... serve as 'sorting areas'. The broad scale association which they provide ultimately leads to the stuff of 'sociometrics'. That is, people find that they very much like certain people and dislike others. They find people with similar interests, and they find people whose interests aren't similar but are interesting nonetheless. Third places often serve to bring together for the first time, people who will create other forms of association later on. (Oldenburg, 1999: *xvii*)

Oldenburg believes that these characteristics, diversity and inclusiveness, are what allow a number of individuals from different backgrounds to initiate contact, interact comfortably and form valuable bridging relationships:

> the inclusive third place brings the individual into close, personal, and animated contact with fellow human beings who also happen to teach school, distribute pharmaceutical products, paint houses, sell office equipment, or write for the local newspaper. (1999: 45)

Under such conditions, the willingness to host a range of individuals encourages individuality among its members. Through their diversity, third places provide communities with a source of political and intellectual stimulation and perspective. Because conversation is a central activity of the third place, it commonly acts as a forum for discourse.

It is, however, the feature of novelty that distinguishes the third place and entices individuals to repeatedly return. As Jacobs suggested in her exploration of urban streetscapes, the possibility of spontaneity and novelty, or a sense of mystery, removes individuals from the dullness of habit that is experienced in everyday life. Oldenburg too believes that:

> novelty is also inherent in the lack of scheduling and organization, looseness of structure, and fluidity in the composition of those in attendance.... A resulting uncertainty surrounds each visit. Who among the regulars will be there? Will someone not seen in a long while show up? Will one of the gang bring a friend or a relative? (1999: 46)

Novelty generates a degree of excitement and anticipation for those attending third places and provides additional cognitive stimulation:

> Although [mystery] is a familiar concept in the context of landscape architecture and has long been used in the designs of Japanese gardens, it is somewhat unexpected in the context of psychology. Perhaps for this reason there has been an inclination to translate it into some more familiar concept, such as 'surprise'. A critical difference between mystery and surprise, however, is that in a surprise the new information is present and it is sudden. In the case of mystery, the new information is not present; it is only suggested or implied. Rather than being sudden, there is a strong element of continuity. The bend in the road, the brightly lighted field seen through a screen of foliage – these settings imply that the new information will be continuous with, and related to, that which has gone before. Given this continuity one can usually think of several alternative hypotheses as to what one might discover. The mind filling ... experiences of entertaining a few fairly strong alternatives at once should yield a high level of preference; research ... suggests that this is in fact the case. (Kaplan and Kaplan in Hiss, 1991: 40 - 41)

The built environment and material culture, inclusive of interior and exterior spaces, greatly contribute to a sense of novelty and are crucial components to a sense of environmental well-being and the success of place. The more effective pubs are often found to have a number of features that produce successful places. For example, many traditionally styled Irish pubs have obscured the front street-level window. This characteristic prohibits a visual assessment of the interior prior to entry. Once inside, the lights are dimmed and there may be snugs or booths situated throughout the premises, seating tucked into corners or under a set of stairs. Perhaps a back room is available to explore and the toilets may be located upstairs, outside, or might even be the in the private bathroom of the property owner. Each pub is different and every time a pub space is entered an opinion is immediately formed by the patron based on the ambience, the crowd at the bar, the 'cosiness' factor, the cleanliness (or lack there of), the friendliness, the service, the quality of the product, etc. This type of variation and novelty can be dramatically compared to the brightly-lit shopping centre or franchise eatery, where identical floor plans can be found in every outlet, the product is identical and the experience remains consistently unvaried.

Fig. 3 Pub Nooks.

However, the elements of mystery in the third place are within an understandable and familiar context that links the individual to their surroundings. Continuity, regularity and a sense of place conceptually contribute to identity of the self and communal identity. Therefore, although an important feature of the third place is the opportunity for stimulation and escape, it also offers continuity through a shared sense of place:

> patrons ... engage in the familiar and negotiated ordering of a complex and diverse situation by identifying themselves in relation to others and becoming situated within an ongoing, and stable community. (Katovich and Reese, 1987: 310)

Third places provide regularity and a sense of belonging throughout time and space, providing a degree of psychological comfort. The presence of regular inhabitants, or 'regulars,' is a sign of a genuine third place. In their analysis of regulars at a community-based urban bar, Katovich and Reese state that: '[u]nlike strangers, who remain alien to the social structure despite being here today and staying tomorrow, regulars remain socially integrated by being emphatically present in spirit, even when absent' (1987: 309). They conclude, 'regulars represent a stable and seemingly permanent population within a group' (1987: 309). In some cases, regulars use the third place not only as a 'home from home' but also as an office outside of the workplace. Employees bring their paperwork or laptop to the café or pub to catch up on work, students study and the occasional work-related meeting occurs outside of the office and in the third place.

Figs 4 and 5 The 'cosiness' factor.

A third place also acts as a 'home from home' - comfortable yet absent of the domestic pressures of the household. During my research, pub places were often described as comfortable, relaxing and leisurely by many of the informants. Territories were designated by regulars in which particular places at the bar or even specific stools were reserved for their occupation. They expressed a sense of 'belonging' and often described 'their place at the bar,' 'their' pub or 'their place'. Photos of regular pub users or postcards from regulars on holiday were often tacked behind the bar. Similarly, in their ethnographic research in an American urban bar, anthropologists Katovich and Reese (1987) found:

> The bar was usually referred to as 'my' or 'our' place.... [R]egulars commonly called the Derby 'my home away from home' and the other regulars as 'my family' – alluding to the familiar aspects of the community. (319)

Fig. 6 Belonging to place.

The pub, like other third places, while appearing casual and lacking in formalities is in actuality a highly controlled social environment with understood modes of behaviour (Kneale, 1999), particularly in those pubs where there is a strong presence of regulars. During one observation, for example, I noticed that the ordering of drinks took place at the end of the bar (where there was more room for movement). This was an unspoken rule that all pub inhabitants obeyed. On this occasion, several non-regulars entered into the establishment and, ignorant of the

specific procedure for obtaining drinks, attempted to order from a different point on the bar. The barman ignored them for several minutes until a regular, without making eye contact or turning his head, directed them to the correct spot on the bar upon which they were promptly served. Similarly, Katovich and Reese noted that 'nonregulars (often, "them guys" or "ya'll") were rebuked with "that's not the way we do it here"' (1977: 319) as a means to regulate social behaviour and maintain order.

Just as social networks can reinforce hegemonies, those places in which they are located can also be patterned by hierarchies of class, gender, status, etc. From her observation of a British pub Watson (2002) concludes that 'the pub serves as a "home from home." ... Essential to the very idea of the notion of a "public house" is the idea of a "home" with a "host" (189). She adds, however, that 'it is a "house" which is open to the public but which has formal and unspoken rules of behaviour and which welcomes some types of customer more than it welcomes others' (2002: 189). Curtin and Ryan (1989) in their study of pubs in Ennis town in the late 1980s argue that:

> observation clearly indicates a distinct pattern in the frequenting of pubs and lounges. In fact, more than half the bars in Ennis can be classified as 'working class only' establishments and 'local' pubs continue to function as semi-exclusive social clubs' (142).

Their research findings indicate that pubs can be inclusive and inviting as Oldenburg suggests, or territorial and hierarchical – depending on the pub type, the location and the clientele.

Accessibility in the everyday

In order for third places to be successful and benefit individuals they must be accessible to the surrounding community. The proximity of a third place to home and work places becomes relevant if it is to successfully function as a 'home from home'. For example, if travelling significant distances is necessary to gain access to a third place it immediately limits those who can and will attend, therefore

blocking access to overall community participation. Moreover, if there is considerable distance between communities and third places, as found in suburban sprawl, other activities or locations will be sought out. As well, regular place attendance becomes less likely as greater effort is required to frequent the location. Therefore, an accessible, locally-based third place that integrates a quality built environment, an encouraging material culture and an active social world will be used most frequently and yield the greatest benefits to individuals and the community.

A third place that is accessible to community, preferably by foot, can be advantageous to its members in a number of practical ways. Oldenburg believes that it is necessary for individuals to claim a place that is informal, relaxed and fulfilling and located in the public or semi-public arena. The third place allows for this to occur and provides a neutral setting for a diverse grouping of individuals to initiate relationships and form valuable networks. As stated previously, third places are often inclusive and work as mixers and levellers, thus optimising social capital among their patrons that extends out into the greater community. The third place offers varying degrees of social support to the surrounding population and these places may, for example, take on the role of meeting place or shelter during a local crisis, become a site of community fundraising or provide a regular social setting for members of the retired community. Third places might also, in some cases, supply financial assistance in times of need. For example, in one pub I attended, I participated in regular end-of-week raffles in which the winners tended to be community members who were in need. Several informants admitted, quietly and with discretion, that the individuals were actually selected and not, as it was presented, winners by chance.

In addition to the numerous practical benefits of successful third places, these semi-public institutions profit their patrons in a number of conceptual ways. As a part of the unobtrusive lifeworld, a third place becomes part of an intimate orbit from which individuals draw upon to interpret their worlds and give meaning to their

experiences. The practice of inhabiting a lived environment that is neither the home nor the workplace creates an inter-personal dynamic where relaxation and comfort can, in many cases, be obtained more easily. As a result, the development of an intimate relationship with a third place routinely supplies its patrons with emotional and psychological comfort.

Ultimately, successful third places facilitate healthy and efficient societies on a number of levels. As the Irish pub in the North West meets much of the criteria that Oldenburg has determined as characteristic of a third place, I have identified the public house as the primary third place both regionally and nationally.[11] This relationship of the place of the pub, the presence of busy social networks, and, as will be discussed in the following section, a geography of identity have resulted in an ideal location to explore the effect of people on place and place on people.

The sociology of place and identity

Perhaps one of the more complex understandings of place is its re-conceptualisation from a purely geographical setting to a geography of identity. Place becomes occupied by individuals and social groups who claim it as their own through an affiliation to a lived environment. Critically, a sense of place provides individuals and communities with a familiar and meaningful base from which to observe and position themselves in the world. From this perspective, a sense of place is inextricably linked to the formation of identities; at a most basic level who we are is defined by where we come from.

Sociologists view identity as a complex, multi-dimensional concept that recognises and categorises two major elements of identity composition. Social identity refers to those social groups in which we exist and in the ways in which we present

[11] Oldenburg identifies a number of other 'third places' such as coffee shops, hairdressers and libraries, however, there has been no empirical evidence to date on the role of these places as third places in Ireland. Post offices and grocery shops (Brody, 1973) have been identified as sites of social importance in Ireland, but the pub remains the most popular public place of social interaction.

ourselves in public. Alternatively, a sense of self, or in sociology the ego identity, is the subjective understanding of ourselves (Grace and Woodward, 2006):

> While self-identity is composed in complex interaction with others and closely joined with social identity, it is a reference to the self, that sense of ourselves as unique and individual persons. The self is also implicated in social identity. 'Social identity' refers to our recognition of and response to others' categorizations of us in terms of personhood, gender, 'race', ethnicity, sexual orientation, class and marital status, for example. While self-identity expresses individual values and preferences, specifying the uniqueness of the person, social identity captures what we hold in common, what we share in terms of experiences with other people of the same sex, 'race', ethnic group, class or marital status. Social identities can also refer to roles, occupations, social positions or even stereotypes emphasizing real or imagined shared personal attributes, moral orientation or abilities which are believed to signify enduring features of a person's life. (Byrne, 2003: 3)

Erving Goffman, who authored the central text on social identity in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1971), asserts that self and social identity are performances in which individuals project various identities to different audiences. The creation of individual, group and social identities involves the formation of interactions and relationships with people and, as I will argue throughout this research, place. These interactions within the lifeworld, whether fleeting, everyday encounters or long-term intimate relationships, provide opportunity for ongoing reflexivity, influencing and informing our responses, and informing our understanding of where and who we are in the world. The 'construction of a front' or the use of social masks is an individualised structuring of self-identity that is influenced by cultural norms and expectations. Goffman's identity framework is structured on the key argument that identities are:

> formed through a process of dramatic realisation, this is the dramatising of activities by emphasising (mainly positive) aspects of the portrayed role. To assist with this dramatic realisation, the actor constructs a personal front as a mechanism to communicate information about the role that is being played. The front involves anything that supports the role, such as clothing, furniture, decor, facial expression and posture. (Prevos, 2006: 2)

Building on Goffman's analysis is the exploration of the role of place as a 'front' for identity to constructed and projected. In this thesis I will argue that particular places such as the pub place play a key role in the construction of identity through

the provision of a setting for those expressions. Furthermore, as previously discussed, place informs individuals and groups who they are by providing meaning to their experiences and it is within place that social discourse and expressions of hegemonic power are actualised and subverted. The experience of the everyday provides opportunity to habitually compose and reinforce individual and social identities through the integration of geography into the lifeworld.

Expressions of social identity in public spaces are varied and complex. Place meaning contributes to performances of identity as, for example, the pub operates as a location of socially determined norms of behaviour. Place-based activities such as public drinking and other normalised pub behaviours are deeply integrated into individual and group perceptions of identity. Participation in alcohol consumption and communicative socialising, for example, are features of the pub geography and it is in the pub that place, social capital and identity coalesces.

Changing places and changing identities

While people tend to live in a relational locality that becomes mapped in the lifeworld, a new sense of place has emerged as part of the contemporary globalisation[12] process where spatial understandings of geography have become decreasingly significant. Although migration, place-making, territoriality and the expression of power through place has been a consistent human characteristic, the current global movement has been dramatically accelerated in the altering of cultural conceptualisations of time, distance, space and place. The current phase of globalisation has not resulted in a total replication and repudiation of places[13], but has instead produced a homogenised effect on the landscape as commodification and consumerism become culturally dominant. Soja's concept of the 'postmodern

[12] For the purpose of this thesis, globalisation refers to the movement of people and ideas, and the formation of an international culture, economy, workforce and network of communication.

[13] Indeed, globalisation has in some ways brought about a more reflexive identification with the local. Also, the homogenisation and loss of place distinctiveness has created a greater need to obtain a sense of belonging to places of perceived authenticity, hence the popularity of cultural and diasporic tourism. These concepts will be discussed in chapter five.

geography' (1996, 2003) in which the social landscape is designed as a commodity and the emergence of new spaces, simulated places, 'fourth place' (Wenner, 1997), non-places, cyber spaces and virtual spaces have become integrated into the everyday. Place no longer has fixed boundaries and has become much more fluid, permeable and mixed, and the meaning of place has shifted rapidly. Indications of this adjustment can be observed in Celtic Tiger/post-Tiger Ireland where space has become more permeable and fragmented (Corcoran and Peillon, 2004). This breakdown in the meaning of place and, on a more local scale, in the continuity of community, has a number of far-reaching social consequences (Soja, 1996, 2003; Wenner, 1997; Oldenburg, 1999; Putnam, 2000).

The transformation of place has resulted in the blurring of home/work/leisure spaces and in designations of public/private space. The extension of new spaces into the public sphere has led to a number of significant social effects on the production of social capital and identity construction. As a result, the contemporary experience of globalisation has resulted in a re-mapping and re-shaping of the physicality of place and has also generated a number of conceptual questions for identity:

> The global-local nexus is associated with new relations between space and place, fixity and mobility, centre and periphery, 'real' and 'virtual' space, 'inside' and 'outside', frontier and territory. This, inevitably, has implications for both individual and collective identities and for the meaning and coherence of community. (Robins, 1996: 40)

Cultural identity in Ireland has been constructed so that place and identity largely correspond to one another. As place meaning is undergoing a rapid and disjointed transformation as a consequence of contemporary globalisation, the coherence of identity and place has become increasingly disrupted by socio-spatial alterations. The impact on individuals, groups and communities in Ireland is profound.

In contrast to the more traditional methods in which identities are composed, including place, identities are becoming more individualised and created through consumption and lifestyle. In a postmodern world, self-narratives are becoming

more fluid as lifestyles become more adjustable and theoretically, 'people can choose from a range of identities, recomposing biographical narratives of self and re-presenting themselves anew' (Byrne, 2003: 445). Social theorist Douglas Kellner (1992) describes the postmodern identity as an 'artificial construct' (154). Marcuse's classic exploration of identity within a critical theory framework in *One Dimensional Man* (1964) is useful in the assessment of contemporary identities in relation to the rapidly changing places of Celtic Tiger and post-Tiger Ireland. Marcuse's description of the identity formation of individuals focuses on those aspects of modernity he believes are limiting to the formation of identity. He identifies media, consumerism and technology as barriers to individual identity construction in that they distract individuals by creating false needs and standardise our sense of self, compromising personal freedoms as the desire to commodify and accumulate become a social priority:

> Marcuse draws on Heidegger in his view that private space has been invaded by technological reality and that mass production and distribution claim the entire individual. Our identity becomes controlled by externalities such as the distraction of television, i-pods and computer games, leaving no space to develop our ego identity. (Prevos, 2006: 3)

Marcuse' understanding of the sense of self under the conditions of modernity is useful in the examination of contemporary places and the blurring between public and private spaces. Similarly, sociologists Walker and Bellamy (2001) have found that individuals use technology and select media that confirms lifestyle beliefs. Rosen (2004/2005) argues that personalised technology is being used to filter the environment and customise space, giving individuals greater agency over identity through lifestyle choices and rapidly changing the ways in which we relate to place and to each other. This freedom to choose identity through lifestyle, argues Kellner (1992), can be beneficial for some individuals but generally leads to fragmentation, disconnection and is socially problematic. Furthermore, the drive to customise private environments to lifestyles, for example, has led to the emergence of new domestic spaces in Ireland. As a result, the home is gradually superseding the use of public places for leisure activities, suggesting an increase in exclusivity, the distancing of community and a depletion of social capital.

The transformation of space and place and questions of personal identity has led to increased anxiety and what psychologist Ferguson (1994) describes as 'social melancholy.' In the context of Ireland, Keohane and Kuhling have designated this phenomenon 'the melancholy spririt of the Celtic Tiger' (2007: 107). As individuals are further distanced from the locale in which they live and seek out different places to inform and compose identities, the use of themed environments and other postmodern spaces has become an effective means for the consumption of lifestyle. This development repudiates place-bound identities and creates a touristic approach to the environment in which 'we are all tourists now' (O'Connor, 1997: 40). This phenomenon has created a cultural response of nostalgia for places of meaning:

> David Harvey (1989), in his major study of the increasing globalization and time-space compression of the present era, has argued that not only does the growing mobility and internationalization of these times make our old notions of places as settled, coherent communities more difficult to sustain but the very fact of heightened spatial mobility, and the feeling – which he sees as a product of it – that we live in an increasingly unstable and uncertain world, also make us *need* even more strongly that notion of place as secure and stable. (Massey, 1995b: 48)

Similar to the tourist's relationship to place, identities are increasingly focused on encounters with themed environments, which are often used by individuals and groups as mechanisms to compose lifestyle. The consumption of themed space, whether in homage to the traditional Irish pub as imagined by the diaspora or in the installation of a domestic pub space that suggests middle-class domesticity, is an attempt, according to Slattery (2003), to momentarily appease the desire for an authentic belonging to place.

The on-going influence of the tourist, although present on the pub landscape for over a century, has become more sophisticated through the use of marketing and themeing, contributing to the creation of new spaces. The projection of perceived notions of Irishness onto the Irish people at leisure has also dramatically changed the place of the pub, the individuals who inhabit the pub and the ways in which

many Irish people define and experience identities of 'Irishness' and Irish identity on a number of levels. As a result, Irish identity has become commodified, 'othered' and subjected to the gaze of the tourist. While the touristic use of the Irish pub has been explored by O'Connor (1993, 1997, 2006), Cronin (2006) and McGovern (2006), further investigation into the effects of tourism on the pub as a third place have yet to be explored.

As place changes, the Irish pub as a third place is undergoing a transformation. While change varies from pub to pub, a distinctive pattern of transformation is underway. Most significantly, it appears that the pub as a third place is on the decline as new geographies increasingly become alternative sites of leisure. With the reconfiguration of place and changes in the experience of place, the exploration of the impact on individuals, communities and society are key themes explored in this project. Oldenburg, for example, is concerned that new places are less able to provide important social functions and:

> recognizes that something more than mere 'place' is lost when third places disappear from the landscape, that fuelling that 'loss' is an inherent shift in cultural sensibilities and reason for that shift. (Wenner, 1997: 73)

Drawing on Oldenburg, Wenner argues that the experience of third place cannot be replicated in other places and 'the most important ... purpose or function served by informal public gathering places cannot be supplied by any other agencies in society' (Wenner, 1997: 73).

What's more, social scientists have suggested that community is in a state of fragmentation and decline due to developments of modernity and changing in modes of social interaction and a decrease in shared spaces, resulting in a weakened connection to place. Community without propinquity has been characterised by social alienation, fragmentation, and what Oldenburg refers to as the 'problem of place' (13). Third places, and thus the Irish pub, have been particularly affected, impacting the people of the surrounding community in a

number of ways. This project aims to explore the development of this contemporary geography of identity as the Irish pub as a third place is transformed.

Conclusion

The Irish pub in the role of quintessential third place is a key site to explore the link between place and people. The central position of the pub on the socio-geographical landscape throughout time and space and its continued standing within contemporary Irish society provides an ideal geography to examine the effect of place on people and people on place.

The impact of space and place on the formation and presentation of individual and group identities is a reoccurring theme throughout this thesis. Experiences of place including power, status, gender, 'Irishness', lifestyle and other expressions of identity are explored at length through the lens of the Irish pub.

The pub has developed over time to become a successful semi-public place that benefits the surrounding community by encouraging diversity and social networking. In this role, the pub is able to promote the experience of emotional and mental well being through the generation of an informal sense of community and camaraderie, resulting in improved social integration and public membership. Place intimacy and an emotional experience of place help to connect individuals and groups to third places, which are then integrated and mapped into the lifeworlds of community members.

Yet the pub, like many other modern geographies, is currently undergoing rapid transformation. In some cases, pub culture is changing to accommodate individual and group lifestyles and becoming less focused on functioning as a community meeting point. In other situations, pub places are rapidly fading due to low attendance. Postmodern sites of leisure, including new domestic spaces and themed place, are beginning to supersede pub places. If the experience of the pub

place is integrated into the lifeworlds of Irish people, as I have suggested, then what is the impact of transformed or lost pub space? Furthermore, as Irish society undergoes rapid transformation, what are the effects on place meaning, the construction of place and the material culture of place? This project will discuss these issues thematically, employing a number of related theoretical links in the analysis of the place of the Irish pub.

Chapter Two: *Methodology*

> [Public houses] should be made a subject for intensive study by sociologists [and] social psychologists.... As an institution its importance in the lives of Western society can no longer be denied or neglected. Other aspects of the tavern should be studied. These would include the following: the history and function of the modern tavern; the difference in the role of public drinking houses in various societies; the relation between public drinking houses in various societies; the relation between public drinking houses of the West, the coffee houses of the Middle East, and the tea houses of the Orient.... There is a need for studies of social interaction in neighbourhood taverns, resort taverns, ethnic taverns, hotel bars, cocktail lounges, and the various other subvarieties found in modern ... life. (Clinard, 1962: 295)

Pub culture and the pub place can be situated within a number of largely positive discursive contexts: a community hub; a location for relaxation, fun and leisure; a site of social interaction; a place of history and heritage for diaspora; and with the recent transformation of pub life, the loss of community. The pub exists in the everyday and is hugely successful as a social institution, yet a sociological understanding of how it has become so central in the lives of the Irish remains largely uninvestigated. Informants were often stumped when queried as to why the pub was so central. This is partly because people, conceptually, consciously and bodily, take the everyday for granted and tend to accept their lifeworld unquestioningly – 'people are immersed in a world that normally unfolds automatically' (Seamon, 2000).

This research seeks to explore the ways in which Ireland's social and historical development has influenced and contributed to the emergence of the public house. I have extensively examined the relationship between Irish identity and the pub and investigated the ways in which identities of power, issues of modernity, diaspora discourse and touristic understandings of 'Irishness' have contributed to the development of contemporary drinking practices, pub culture and the discourse of the pub. I posit that the Irish pub has formed in response to a complex set of social relations in time and place. Furthermore, in the role of third place, the pub significantly informs the construction and projection of the identities of individuals,

communities and Irish society as a primary site of social interaction and social networks.

In setting out to explore pub places and pub culture, the ways in which the relations between places and identities are constituted are elucidated. The focus is directed towards how identities shape place and place shapes identities and of the ways in which places and identities are co-produced through the people/place relationship. The study produces an account of pub users' perceptions and experiences of the lived in, everyday place of the pub as they experienced and engaged in processes and practices associated with the creation and expression of identities. It also assesses the impact of the built environment of the pub as it evokes visceral sensations, emotions, moods and behaviours. Using the Irish pub as an investigative lens, this research hopes to better understand the people/place relationship within an Irish context and challenge the dearth of sociological research on the pub.

In chapter one I outlined the thematic approaches to comprehension of the place of the pub through paradigmatic discussions on the everyday, place, place experience and identity. I also highlighted how explorations into the people/place relationship were largely absent from sociological research. This chapter outlines the data collection process on which the analysis of this thesis is based. A framework and justification for the qualitative methodology used to gather data is presented and each methodological choice is described in its application to the research.

This is a study focused on issues related to the experience of the pub place, participation in pub culture and the influence of the place of the pub on identity and activity from the pub user's perspective. On the undertaking of this research I determined that a greater knowledge of pub places and pub culture could be obtained if individual experiences and understandings of place were included in the research design. A research strategy was developed to evaluate the relationship that forms between people and places. My methodological approach was guided by

the focus of producing rich, descriptive data and uncovering a cohesive understanding of the people/place relationship. To fulfil these aims, I developed a qualitative model that included participant observation and interviews.

This chapter charts the design and methodological choices appropriate to this study. I highlight some of the theoretical ideas emanating from the literature that were presented in the preceding chapter and link these conceptual understandings to methodological choices. A detailed description of the research strategy for the project is outlined and a discussion on the qualitative approach advocated for this study is provided. Finally, a number of ethical considerations and reflexive thinking will be covered.

The setting

My overall aim is to document and analyse the significant presence of pubs on the cultural landscape of the North West of Ireland. I have examined the connection between the pub users and the pub place through unobtrusive participant observation and semi-structured open-ended interviews with the participation of pub users from several counties in the North West region of Ireland. The North West was selected as the research location in an attempt to explore pub users, pub culture and pub places within a regional context.

The North West of Ireland is composed of three counties drawn from the provinces of Ulster and Connaught. The North West is a geographical region that consists of counties Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal with respective populations of 60,894, 29,950, and 147,264 (Central Statistics Office: 2006). Until recently, the region relied on more traditional industries such as fishing in the coastal areas, livestock agriculture and clothing and textile industries. Donegal and west Leitrim, isolated from the rest of the Republic, has historically suffered severe economic hardships and, through the years, heavy emigration. More recently, the economic boom has helped the region as a whole make notable gains following the Celtic Tiger with

growths in tourism, the service sector and information technology. Many parts of the region, however, continue to struggle from the marked reduction in agriculture, fishing and the production industry (SAIL, 2003).

The area features a unique landscape that is composed of alternately sandy and rugged coastline, mountains, cliffs, hills and bogs. Although each of the three counties vary, they are all characterised by large regions of remote landscape, villages and small to medium sized towns. Sligo town and Letterkenny are the two population hubs in the region.

Fig. 7 Counties of Ireland.

As a mostly rural region comprising of small rural/village populations with a small number of urban centres and growing suburban areas, the North West seemed ideal for exploring the changing social landscape of the pub. Social research in the

North West provided an opportunity to examine aspects of rural Ireland within a quickly changing social, cultural and economic environment.

As outline in the previous chapter, I intend to increase the sociological understanding of contemporary pubs and to assess the importance of the pub in the construction and projection of Irish identities through the exploration of a number of key themes. It is anticipated that this project will adequately investigate broad theoretical concepts such as the relationship between space and identity construction, postmodern identities, globalisation and contemporary conceptualisations of place, 'third place', non-spaces and the loss of place and provide relevant links to the development of the current pub phenomenon.

Choosing a focus

Initially I intended to conduct a broad ethnographic study of the pub to examine the significance of the public house in Ireland but quickly found that I was overwhelmed by the multifariousness of pub culture. Acknowledging the wide ranging nature of my idea and the subsequent difficulties that I might encounter theoretically and methodologically, I decided early on to refocus the project to explore the relationship of place and people, using the pub as an investigative lens. Mine is a study focused on issues related to the interaction and experience of people and, for the purposes of this thesis, the pub place and the impact of that place on the formation and expression of identities. It is hoped that this study then addresses the absence of theoretical debate on the pub on the cultural landscape and its role in the everyday lives of people living in the North West of Ireland.

My personal experience of becoming integrated into a rural Irish community and participating in the everyday place of the pub has been used to craft the sample. Immersion into pub culture, all jokes aside, was not difficult. I have attended various drinking establishments since I was of legal age to drink and like most people in Ireland, I have several pubs that I frequent with some regularity. It was at

these sites that my fieldwork naturally started. I had already established myself as part of the social landscape in these locations and I negotiated my new role of fieldworker with ease. Upon commencing my background research, however, I quickly realised the dearth of social research on the public house. The handful of drinking house ethnographies that have been produced were mostly based in urban settings in the United States and were over twenty years old. While these studies are interesting, my encounters with pub users and pub places suggested something more inclusive of personal experiences of the pub was needed to gain a broader understanding of pubs and the people/place relationship.

On the other hand, research on a number of main themes present in this project – everyday places, social capital, place experience and place and identity – have been well developed. The small but growing body of research on the relationship of people and place provided some guiding hypotheses to this study. This project was devised to elaborate upon these main themes with the view that they are interdependent and are experienced within the unique place of the pub in the role of the third place. This study is an exploratory piece but with the central aim of producing a sophisticated account of how people experience, are informed by, and construct the place of the pub. I will demonstrate how the people/place relationship, using the Irish third place as an investigative tool, plays a major role in the construction and expression of a number of individual and social experiences. Through this research I will make a number of conceptual propositions about the people/place relationship:

- Within the context of broader social patterns, each of place is unique and is the result of a specific set of social relations. The culmination of a unique set of socio-historical circumstances led to the development of the Irish pub as a successful third place. A parallel exists between the formation of culture and the formation of places and explains why, for example, pubs function as third places in Ireland, while cafés are popular in France and diners in the United States.

- People create place and place makes people. Places are constructed over time to meet the needs of society, community, groups and individuals. Place also informs the identities of those who inhabit them. This people/place relationship of people, identity and the construction of place are interdependent and maintained by social relations, discourse and power.
- People construct, reconstruct and express identity through the sites that they inhabit, and identities are informed by those places.
- The people/place relationship is constantly evolving and changing in time and space. Currently, a number of aspects of this relationship are undergoing rapid transformation.

Research goals

Drawing on Oldenburg's text, the concept of the 'third place' was developed and operationalised to allow for testing of this thesis. One feature of this research has been to examine and expand Oldenburg's assertions within a regional Irish context, to establish the role of the contemporary Irish pub in the community and to better understand the interdependent relationship of the pub place and pub users. This research seeks to determine the effect of pub space on people and to explore the impact of people on place through the exploration of a number of key themes. From this core investigation, I further hope to establish a better understanding of the place of the pub and the people who inhabit them through the identification of socio-historical trends leading to the development of the pub as *the* primary Irish third place. I provide a cohesive discussion of the development of the pub as a successful place in the everyday and investigate the role of the public house within the community. This project is also concerned with the examination of the relationship of the pub place, pub users' and the production of 'emplaced experiences' (Cartier, 2005) with a focus on the construction and expression of identities. I have developed this thesis to ascertain the nature of interaction within pubs and to determine the extent to which pubs in the region have, or continue to operate as third places and if so, how this may benefit those who use them in

regards to the wider community. This research aims to examine changing conceptualisations of place and identity and expand the concept of the third place. Overall it also aims to significantly increase the sociological understanding of pubs and drinking and to assess the importance that pubs have in everyday.

Research questions

In this study I carried out an analysis of the belief systems relating to the personal use of alcohol and public houses. Some general questions arise that explore the relationship between people and the pub: How has Ireland's social and historical development influenced and/or contributed to the use of alcohol and the public house? What are the key historical and contemporary trends that have occurred in the pub industry? Do Irish pubs in the North West fulfil Oldenburg's criteria as 'third places'? What, if any, is the relationship between Irish identity and the public house? How has the shift in identity construction affected the relationship of the individual to the geography of the public house? Does community use of the public house and alcohol constitute a dominant expression of culture? In what ways has the entry of tourists into the public houses of the North West affected the institution of the pub? How have dramatic socio-economic transformations under the Celtic Tiger impacted on the place of the pub and pub culture? And finally, what is the relationship between place and identity? I wanted to know how those from the North West of Ireland conceptualised drinking and pub use and to what degree those conceptualisations affect and form individual lifestyle choices. If the experience of the pub place is integrated into the lifeworlds of Irish people, as I have suggested, then what is the impact of transformed or lost pub space? As Irish society undergoes rapid transformation, what is the effect on place meaning, the construction of place and the experience of place? This thesis will discuss these issues thematically, employing a number of related theoretical links in the analysis of the place of the Irish pub.

Why pubs?

Pubs are central to Irish community and are key sites of social interaction. Oldenburg has argued that third places are crucial to the maintenance of the community and the enhancement of social capital. According to Oldenburg, the role of the third place in the community is to provide continuity, regularity, a sense of place – all of which conceptually contribute to the construction of the self, the projection of the self within the public sphere and the generation of a collective identity. The Irish pub is the archetypal third place.

Oldenburg's notion of the third place is useful in conceptualising how the place of the pub has formed and evolved into the institution that it is today. Consequently, because of its public position and the distinctiveness of the pub experience in its role of a third place, we can delve deeper into the relationship of people and place. As a primary site of social networks, the pub is an optimal location to explore social expressions of power, identity and community.

Researching pubs

As discussed in chapter one, there are a number of significant theoretical paradigms that can be applied to the investigation into the relationship of place and people, including a number of conceptual differences between, for example, sociological and geographical approaches. The emergence of different forms of methodological enquiry and variations around research approaches correspond to specific theoretical structures. Research focused on the experience of place tends to reflect this diversity of theoretical and methodological variations. For instance, human geography and environment-behavioural research favour quantitative, survey based and experimental approaches committed to a positivistic logic. Place research in the traditions of human geography, architecture and design has typically focused on quantitative methods in the quest to produce situated knowledge and mappable

data. While quantitative methods have a number of benefits[12], such research concentrates on gathering, documenting, measuring and analysing a number of causal factors. Similarly, within the field of epidemiology cross-cultural and international alcohol consumption have been widely investigated using various quantitative (Choquet, 1999; Morgan, 1999; Mongan *et al,* 2007), psychology (Morgan and Grube, 1994; Grube *et al*, 1997) and cross-cultural studies (Pittman, 1962; Bales, 1962). These positivist-based disciplines have generally relied on the generation of large amounts of quantitative data through geographical and regional science, economic modelling, mapping and spatial interaction in an attempt to identify and document human/spatial patterns.

In contrast, aspects of sociology, anthropology, cultural geography and phenomenology favour research designs driven by qualitative methods that invoke a radically different approach to exploring experience and subjectivity of place. As opposed to those methodological approaches based within a positivist framework, the qualitative investigation focuses on those informants who were willing to volunteer and articulate their specific place experiences. While quantitative material is complementary and useful in informing the development of primary qualitative data, qualitative methods help the researcher to better understand the phenomenon from an insider's perspective. As a result, ethnographic methods have more recently been applied to geographically based place research (Katz, 1991; Merrifield, 1995; Aiken, 2003) with the intention of producing qualitatively based 'maps of consciousness' (Haraway, 1991: 191). Differentiated places such as touristed places (Nash, 1994); gendered places (Campbell and Philips, 1995); children's spaces (Aitken, 2003; Holloway and Valentine, 2000); colonial and postcolonial geographies (Blunt and Rose, 1994); contested places (Massey, 1994, 1995); replicated place (McGovern, 2006); postmodern place (Wenner, 1997); representational geographies (Thrift, 1996); and everyday places (Bennett and Watson, 2002; Katovich and Reese, 1987; Oldenburg, 1999; Reilly, 1976) have

[12] For an example of problems associated with quantitative methodology and data see Oakley and Oakley (1993). An excellent discussion on the value of quantitative data in research can be found in Jayaratne and Stewart (1995).

been extensively researched from a selection of qualitative methods in the traditions of anthropology, sociology, cultural geography and tourism studies.

This project is firmly located within this second paradigm and is making an explicit case for the use of a qualitative approach. In the undertaking of this project I decided that the most effective research method for the examination of the relationship between people and place would be qualitative research methods. The aim of this research was to collect a body of rich qualitative data that is based on in-depth interviews and participant observation. The goal of qualitative research has been described as the development of concepts which help us to understand social phenomena in natural (rather than experimental) settings, giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences and views of all the participants. Moreover, qualitative methodology is often used when there is little known about a topic, to gain new insight into an area or to interpret culturally significant phenomena. The researcher 'is not seen as an expert on the subject under study but instead the participant's expert knowledge of her or his culture is stressed' (Aitken, 2003: 15). It became clear in the early stages of the research and from the implications of the broad research questions outlined above that a focus on pub users' words and experiences would generate rich, in-depth and theoretically significant data on a largely unexplored topic. Finally, qualitative methods are used to produce 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) of the social phenomenon being studied.

The emphasis of this research was the production of rich, complex knowledges of the relationship between people and place through the place of the pub. Due to the position of the pub in the everyday I felt it necessary to engage in research activities that appropriately 'locate the observer in the world' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 4). This approach permits the researcher to identify subtle or hidden aspects of the day-to-day lives of individuals and communities and allows for the creation of new knowledges. For this to occur, I determined it was necessary to immerse myself in pub culture through observation and participation and to dialogue with pub participants.

Qualitative methods were also applied, in part, for a number of practical reasons. The overall nature of pub culture – social, conversational and convivial - facilitated qualitative research in the form of participation, observation and interviews. Informants appeared relaxed and eager to share their thoughts and insights into 'their' place with an outsider, and pub-talk was an excellent place to explore the pub. Many of the respondents expressed interest in discussing Irish pubs, which was useful as personal appeal can motivate the respondent to provide more thorough and accurate descriptions.

Having considered broadly the central components of an open and evolving methodological approach, the following section reviews the research process that was used in this project.

Methodology choices

Research designs in the qualitative tradition can range from fixed and pre-structured to open and emergent. Sarantakos (2004) suggests that in most cases of qualitative research, the investigator commences fieldwork with some knowledge about the research setting but not enough about the research question to support a conclusion or theory. My approach to research methodology initially incorporated a degree of uncertainty that I believed must be accepted and transformed into possibility and pattern. This approach was developed creatively and openly to allow for an emergent research process to fully develop and evolve. In devising a research strategy it was expected that the study would be exploratory and that potentially new and exciting theoretical and empirical observations would surface during the course of the project. Therefore, qualitative methodologies were selected to allow for the emergence of unexpected hypotheses and themes, initially unforeseen.

In the current study, my own acquaintance of the everyday experience of pub culture provided me with a generalised understanding of pub places and the role of

the pub in Ireland. This familiarity with the setting was my starting point for the research process. From this point, I allowed a research plan to develop. However, in my role of adaptive qualitative researcher I had no clear sense of what I would find or how the discoveries would proceed. As opposed to positivist research, where the researcher typically begins her inquiry *knowing* what she does not know, the qualitative researcher is uncertain of the knowledge she hasn't yet discovered. The topic is considered as uncharted territory that the researcher attempts to explore. This was of particular importance in the exploration of the everyday to overcome assumptions of familiarity of a known environment. The core interest in the research topic, flexibility, perceptiveness and the willingness to readily portray human experience to the research environment was the engine for the development of the research as it progressed. It was in this belief that I determined that the best methods would be those that were open to evolving methodological possibilities and permit social experience to emanate in a rich, multidimensional manner. The application of emerging methodological approaches to this topic contributed to the understanding of the relationship that arises from place and experience in new ways by identifying qualities and patterns that arise from everyday pub use. Tesch (1987), in her depiction of research as a flow and spiral, describes the changeable and serendipitous nature of the research experience:

> Obviously, the researcher must begin somewhere and intends to end somewhere. Thus there is a movement, a progression, and eventually, an arrival. It would be wrong, however, to picture this movement as a straight, sequential process. It is even a bit misleading to think of it as a process. To conjure up an image of what this movement is like, it helps to see it more in terms of a flow, or of a cycling and spiralling motion that have no clearly distinguishable steps or phases. Typically, the researcher would be hard pressed to say where this flow begins. She knows only that her first data collection session already contained the seeds of what is usually termed the 'analysis'. The first ideas of how to make sense of the data are born then, and other ideas may come to her at any time during any research activity, even up to the eventual writing of her results. (231-232)

It is critical for qualitative researchers to stay open to allow theory to emerge from the data while also remaining conscious of theory and the theoretical perspectives that have influenced the research project. Equally, a flexibility towards the

research 'flow' allows the student the freedom to take advantage of any emergent methodological opportunities. In the case of this research, openness to the research process led to the development of an interpretative *bricolage* framework, as outlined in chapter one, and a complementary methodological strategy based on a 'patchworked' thematic analysis. This approach to the research process was devised over time to uncover multiple layers of pub culture and pub place as they emerged. As opposed to a more traditional sociological approach of analysis through a singular paradigmatic framework, the patchwork method aims to establish a larger piece of work through the application of related, yet dynamic, research methodologies and theoretical analysis:

> [The] field sprawls between and crosscuts all of the human disciplines ... [P]ractitioners [of the patchwork approach] are variously committed to modern, postmodern, and postexperimental sensibilities and the approaches to social research that these sensibilities imply. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 11)

A flexible methodology strategy allows the researcher to adjust and evolve the research process in response to emerging concepts. In effect, the researcher works to accommodate the emergence of information and ideas instead of directing the research through a pre-determined method. By selecting this methodological approach I explicitly:

> [Accept] that there is a range of different ways of making sense of the world and ... [am] concerned with discovering the meanings seen by those who are being researched and with understanding their view of the world. (Jones, 1995: 2)

This approach is useful for understanding everyday life due to the multi-dimensional character of the social experience of the day-to-day. The exploratory nature of this project allowed unexpected hypotheses, empirical observations and unforeseen themes to surface as the research evolved over time. Research methods that are tailored to detect the sensory components of the everyday and how they inform human awareness and understanding are crucial in the understanding of the people/place relationship. In order to provide a well-rounded investigation into the social experience of Irish pub culture, the application of dynamic, evolving methodologies were necessary. Different aspects of pub culture required different

forms of investigation to better understand the social phenomenon. The process for the organisation of this approach to research is simple yet effective in that data collection methods are tailored to fit emerging themes:

> The qualitative researcher as *bricoleur* or maker of quilts[13] uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand. If new tools or techniques have to be invented, or pieced together, then the researcher will do this. The choices as to which interpretative practices to employ are not necessarily set out in advance. The 'choice of research practices depends upon the questions being asked, and the questions depend on their context,' what is available in that context, and what the researcher can do in that setting. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 6)

The use of an applied multi-paradigmatic approach can be at times liberating or challenging. A solid, predetermined research strategy may assist the researcher in staying on task and remaining focused at critical moments in the field. Allowing for methodological adjustments and developments to occur as the fieldwork progresses, however, can help the researcher to delve deeper into the subject matter. I determined that it was necessary to facilitate for myself an intimacy with the pub place and pub users through prolonged, firsthand observation and participation. I decided that I would then use that research experience as a foundation for identifying deeper, more generalisable patterns, structures and meanings. The strategy for this approach required an immersion into the experience of pub culture and pub places to produce an intimate, multi-dimensional understanding. Having then decided to focus on two analytic categories that included place and identity, the combined use of depth interviews and participant observation seemed appropriate and effective. My conceptual vehicle to explore the place of the pub was developed to move from the outside to the inside.

[13] The term 'patchwork' (*n.*) may cause some confusion within an Irish context as quilting (*v.*) is often referred to as 'patchwork'. Quilting is a term to describe the piecing together various shapes and sizes of fabric to form a blanket. This pieced blanket is sewn together with a second blanket (the backing), with batting in between to form three layers, which are then 'quilted' together. Quilt making can be either patterned (precise and structured) or patchwork (random and unstructured). Patchwork involves fitting the best pieces of fabric (according to size, shape, etc.) together to produce a complete piece of work.


Fig. 8 & 9 Structured & patchwork

Initially, I explored the history of the pub within the cultural landscape of Ireland to understand the place's history and geography through historical and academic records. Then, in order to encounter the pub experience as directly as possible, I occupied forty-two pubs over the course of the research so that I could carefully observe and describe the situation supporting or related to the experience of pub places. I observed the pub communities firsthand to obtain a sense of place, which I came to understand more fully by in-depth interviews with pub users. Finally, through the routine participation in a select number of pubs, I became a participant and a regular, allowing me to engage in the sites more intimately. A succession of participant observations permitted me to identify a series of themes and patterns of place relationships and to provide an accurate representation of the complexity and essential nature of the pub experience. The on-going participation in pub places allowed me to obtain a first hand experience of a sense of place and develop an understanding of what it meant to be a 'regular'. I found myself increasingly aware of the spatial rhythm of the days, the flow of customers, the subtle effect of environment on mood and the complex but effective ways in which the pub place impacts and is impacted on by the people who inhabit it. By building an intimate account of several different pub cultures, I hoped to build produce an 'archive of lived actualities' (Appadurai, 1996: 11).

Contextualising the study

The are a number of existing qualitative studies drawn from to inform the development of a research strategy and fulfil the research objectives. There has been an increased interest in place, especially in regard to changing places and the impact on the individual and community that have provided some guidance to the emerging themes and analyses. Like qualitative research in a number of disciplines, the starting from point from which this research evolves is a curiosity and openness on the topic where the researcher is ultimately hoping to discover more about the experience and possesses a willingness to be flexible in methodological approach based on emerging ideas.

While a phenomenological methodology was not applied to this project[14], phenomenology contributed a number of investigative approaches to the conceptual and methodological rubric of this qualitative inquiry. As discussed in chapter one, phenomenological theory has been applied and integrated into a variety of disciplines, including sociology, to explore the emotional and visceral experiences of landscape and place. Phenomenological approaches to social research are useful in this respect as they aim to explore and clarify human experience and meanings 'as they spontaneously occur in the course of daily life' (von Eckartsberg, 1998: 3). As outlined in chapter one, phenomenology is concerned with human experience with the environment on a number of levels – emotional, cognitive, visceral, physical – and the objective of this approach is to produce 'a rigorous description of human life as it is lived and reflected upon in all of its first-person concreteness, urgency, and ambiguity' (Pollio *et al*, 1997: 5). Schonhammer (1989), for example, examines the internal and external experience of regular users of Walkman headsets. In his study, he is interested in the impression that these users have on other people as they move through public spaces and how those spaces becomes transformed for the users through the wearing of headsets. In this, Schonhammer seeks to understand the relationship between the individual and the everyday spaces through which they move.

Much phenomenological research has been oriented towards an understanding of the human experience of material environments and built landscapes (Alexander, 1987, 1993; Alexander et al., 1977; Anella, 1990; Chaffin, 1989; Hester 1993; Heib, 1990; Relph, 1976, 1992; Seamon, 1993) and it has been useful in the unfolding of this project. An intimate portrayal of place experience is found in Chaffin's (1989) exploration of a Louisiana river landscape and the surrounding community. In his study 'Dwelling and Rhythm: the Isle Brevelle as a landscape of home,' Chaffin uses a

[14] Phenomenologists subscribe to the belief that through observation and intuition clarity can be achieved. The central figure in the study is the researcher herself. While I concede that intuition, observation and immersion are central features of the fieldwork process, I argue from a sociological perspective that the informants are the key figures in research.

number of qualitative methods to unfold each layer of the lived landscape of the river community of Isle Brevelle. He gradually moves from his own internal experience of the environment to the personal narratives of the people who inhabit the river community. Pertinent to this project, Chaffin attempts to identify the sensations and experiences within time and space while understanding how people contribute to the making of place.

The embodiment of place can be seen in Million's (1993) phenomenological research on displacement. Using in-depth interviews, Million followed the journeys, internally and externally, of a small number of rural Canadian families who were forced to move and resettle under compulsory purchase legislation. While Million's study of displacement explored a different aspect of the people/place relationship, her understanding of the embodiment of place was significant to my own understandings and articulations of a sense of place when discussed by pub users. Her study was also influential because she explored the foundations of a collective relationship to place as she delineated the stages of community displacement, shared loss of place and resettlement.

There have been a small number of worthwhile academic, journalist inspired and self-penned accounts of the public house and drinking house culture that have also provided useful insights into the historical emergence of the pub and the nature of interaction within them. In-depth archival research has been used by Duis (1983) to present an extensive historical telling of the American urban bar and Molloy (2002) used a similar approach for an account of the Irish pub. Barrett (1977) explored historical records for a brief analysis of Irish drinking habits and Stivers (2002) provided a more extensive analysis of Irish and Irish-American drinking narratives and myths. However, as previously discussed, there have been few sociological studies undertaken on the pub and the people who inhabit them in the everyday. This stands in stark contrast to the enormous amount of curiosity, discussion and debate that has taken place in Ireland on the current state of pub culture and the impact on community. As Clinard (1962) aptly noted in his

discussion of alcohol consumption and the public house, '[s]ociological studies of the public drinking house as a contemporary social institution are extremely limited' (271 – 271). Recognising the significance of the pub he called for further sociological investigation and urged that the social needs fulfilled by the public house be identified and studied. Four decades later pubs, bars, taverns and other types of public drinking establishments have had minimal research within the social sciences. A handful of exceptions should be noted, however. Moore's (1897) ethnographic research in Chicago saloons took place over a century ago and, as discussed in chapter one, Harrison (1943) and his team of observers participated in Mass Observation, producing a broad anthropological account of working class pub culture in Lancanshire, Britain. Arensberg's (1959) anthropological account of rural Ireland incorporated observations of the pub to describe an array of social and economic relationships. Extensive ethnographies in the United States have been produced to investigate a variety of public drinking houses including bars, taverns, lounges, pubs and saloons (Cavan, 1966; Cloyd, 1976; Gottlieb, 1957; Macrory, 1950; Richards, 1963-64; Reilly, 1976; Roebuck and Frese, 1976). This body of social research into public drinking houses, while limited, covers an array of themes including drinking attitudes and alcohol consumption (Cassidy, 1997); class and drinking practices (LeMasters, 1973/1975); class and social behaviour (Curtin and Ryan, 1989; Listiak, 1974; Ossenberg, 1969); group relations and communication (Mann, 1977; Oldenburg, 1999); the creation of subversive identities (Kotarba, 1984); and gender dynamics and identities of masculinity (Campbell and Philips, 1995; Fiske, 1987; Katovich and Reese, 1987; Whitehead, 1976). American anthropologists Katovich and Reese (1987) observed day-to-day life in an urban neighbourhood bar, the 'Big Derby Lounge', to explore the relationship between bar regulars and the surrounding community through the construction, display and maintenance of identities by bar regulars in the everyday. Similarly, Peace (1992) used ethnographic methods to gather information on the use of alcohol and pub culture in a small Irish fishing community. Pertinent to this project, Peace used his observations of weekend drinking sessions to 'examine drinking's contribution to the reproduction of social identities within the

community' (1992: 167). Curtin and Ryan (1989) incorporated participant observation of pub culture into their investigation into working class community life. More recently, Fairweather and Campbell (1990) researched the drinking practices and behaviours in rural New Zealand pubs. In their ethnographic research, they focused on the generation and reproduction of rural male identities and expressions of hegemonic masculinity through the use of the pub site.

Fieldwork

Applying methodological approach similar to many studies in this area I felt that a combination of qualitative methods would allow me to explore the relationship between pub users, pub places and the wider community. The study is exploratory in nature and wishes to contribute to an increasing theoretical understanding of the people/place relationship using the pub as an investigative lens. I wish to explore these issues from the points of views and perspectives of the pub users themselves, through an analysis of place-based everyday lived experiences. I would also argue that these experiences must be situated within a wider understanding of the social and cultural landscape and discursive framework within which the place of the pub and pub experiences are generated and produced.

In the role of *bricoleur* I used a number of qualitative tools in order to gather a series of representations of the population and place I was exploring and study an experience or a slice of everyday reality through the process of data collection, content analysis and comparative analysis of everyday situations for the purpose of formulating insights. I determined that it was necessary to obtain an intimacy with the pub place and pub users through prolonged, firsthand observation and participation. The strategy for this approach required an immersion into the experience of pub culture and pub places through the examination, moving gradually from the outside to the inside relying on a multitude of qualitative methods, in order to produce an intimate, multi-dimensional understanding.

Observational approaches, typically in the form of ethnographies, are the primary form of investigation into the public house and into public places in general. These ethnographies are notable in their rich, detailed descriptions of everyday experiences of the inhabitants of a variety of public houses. However, while an ethnographic approach following in the tradition of other drinking house studies seemed like an obvious choice for observing the built environment of the pub and investigating pub culture, I also wanted to know the internal experiences, interpretations and understandings of pub users. I also wanted to understand the ways pub users were affected by the everyday experience of inhabiting a third place, and how they, in effect, contributed to the construction of the pub as a third place. Furthermore, I identified a need to expand the ethnographic tradition of investigating place:

> The bulk of social scientific writing in the area of informal public gathering places consists of ethnographic descriptions that await integration into more abstract and analytical efforts addressing the place and function of these centers of the informal public life of the society. (Oldenburg, 1999: *xii*)

Therefore, while observation and participation were determined to be essential components of this project something more was indicated. Furthermore, I wanted to move beyond a purely ethnographic investigation that typically examines a particular person or group in a specific time and place. I sought out a more investigative approach that began with the similar real-world, everyday situation of pub culture and then progressed to delve deeper into the experience through prolonged, firsthand observation and participation of a select number of sites, as found in the ethnographic studies of, for example, Katovich and Reese in 'The Big Derby Lounge'; Fiske et al. (1987) at 'Surfers Paradise'; Reilly (1976) in 'MacDermott's SHAMROCK Bar' and 'Terry's'. Moreover, I was keen to understand how people experienced and used the pub place and how pub culture was created and maintained by its inhabitants. For this to occur I devised a strategy that invited informants to articulate their internal understanding of place and sense of place and to engage in pub narratives. It was anticipated that observational research would generate ample data to provide relevant links to the development of the

contemporary pub phenomenon and explore the nature of the people/place relationship with a focus on the spatial expression of identity.

Observation and participation

The act of participation and observation can be placed on a spectrum, moving from a complete participation in the phenomenon to studies in which the researcher is disengaged entirely from the activities and approaches the research in the role of observer (Goffman, 1961). This form of research has been distinguished into a number of categories (Gold, 1958): the complete participant, the participant-as-observer, the observer-as-participant and the complete observer. Non-participant observation ensures the '[s]imple observers follow the flow of events. Behaviour and interaction continue as they would without the presence of a researcher, uninterrupted by intrusion' (Adler and Adler: 81).

More recently, researchers using observation acknowledge the legitimisation of participation as a base from which to conduct observation. Roles have now come to be defined in terms of membership role as opposed to roles grounded in pure observation (Adler and Adler, 1988). Adler and Adler (1988) propose three such membership roles: peripheral-member researchers who believe that they can develop an insider's perspective without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership; active-member researchers are those who become involved with the central activities of the group but do no fully commit to members' values and goals; and complete-member researchers who study settings in which they are already members or with which they become fully affiliated during the course of the research:

> The complete observer was one who was to all intents and purposes removed from the setting, and who functioned without interacting in any way with those being observed. Because of the difficulty of maintaining the purity of such a stance, and because such research was sometimes conducted without the informed consent of the observed ..., the observer-as-participant role was considered an acceptable compromise, allowing the researcher to interact 'casually and nondirectively' with subjects; the researcher remained a researcher, however, and did not cross over the line into a friendship....

> Ethnographers trained in sociology are nowadays more inclined than were their predecessors to accept participation as a legitimate base from which to conduct observation. Adler and Adler (1987) have therefore proposed a modification of Gold's familiar typology in recognition of the increasing emphasis in contemporary ethnographic research on 'member-ship roles' as opposed to roles grounded in pure observation. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 113)

Typically, I found myself moving from the position of a 'peripheral-member researcher' (Adler and Adler, 1987) where I was able to obtain an insider's understanding without having to fully commit to the role of an 'active-member researcher,' who 'become[s] involved with the central activities of the group, sometimes even assuming responsibilities that advance the group; they do not, however, necessarily fully commit themselves to members' values and groups' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 113). Unlike this position, I instead engaged in casual pub attendance. My movements, however, were largely determined by particular preference on different occasions and the suitability of participation. Movement across this spectrum of participant and observer, peripheral - or active - member was determined by a number of factors. I did occasionally engage in observation and participation in familiar pubs as the solitary researcher, but because of the nature of Irish pub culture (social) and because of the primarily male clientele and the subsequent gender issues (which will be discussed in later chapters), I often recruited a friend or group to attend the pub with me. This was a simple yet effective way to integrate myself into the pub place and avoid the social difficulties that gendered places, such as the pub, often present.

In this study the parameters of observation involved a general focus on the activities that took place in the pub, including the interactions between the pub users, the pub staff and what I came to refer to as the 'extras'. This third group could include musicians working in the pub who would intermittently become pub users throughout an evening of performing or Roma vendors entering into pub spaces to vend various items. Such observation of the pub place over an extended period of time enabled me to gain an insider's perspective into the function of the pub as a third place in terms of individual and community experience. I was

specifically interested in the internal experience and external expression of individual and group identities of participants and the construction of shared meanings around the inter-linked activities of identity and the pub place. By focusing on the observations of the place of the pub and the words of pub users, I hoped to capture elements of the pub users immersed in the experience of pub culture and the pub place and to attempt to from time to time, to capture that experience for myself.

Data collection was carried out in several stages over a period of three years (*Table 1*, p. 97). The analysis has been supported by historical research and the collation of existing statistical data and through the use of documentary material, including government reports, newspapers and trade journals, in addition to participant observations and interviews. An extensive research plan was developed early on in order to identify and establish a number of theoretical propositions and allied methodological approaches that would explore the multi-layered phenomenon of Irish pub culture. This model identified relevant questions in a number of areas that explore the experiences, conceptions and constructions of place in relation to the public house. The examination of secondary materials relating to an array of drinking houses - pubs, bars, taverns, saloons and lounges - and other semi-public places helped to inform the development of my research plan. Drawing from the number of drinking house ethnographies and research into everyday places, I initially launched a small-scale pilot project to ascertain the best ways to gather a complete knowledge from my resources. In the autumn of 2004 the preliminary work commenced and involved a small number of participant observations and later, twelve in-depth interviews. As the pub is part of the everyday and is included in my own lifeworld, I decided to use my pre-defined pub identity and personal familiarity of several pub places as a springboard for the research process. Because of my own status as an occasional regular within these sites, I was able enter into these three particular pub spaces unobtrusively in the role of researcher. I began attending the pubs approximately two to three times a week over a period of three and a half months. Similar to Katovich and Reese's (1987) casual yet effective

approach to observation in a familiar bar environment, some of the regulars in these locations knew of my newly formed status as researcher, while others did not:

> Prior to our research we were regarded as specific categorical types, and referred to as 'the professors'.... we soon became regarded as a team who would show up to play, but also to be on hand as sociologists. Over time, we became friends with several regulars who would, upon our entrance, announce us with the call, 'Here come the profs!' ... We regarded our acceptance as a serendipitous occasion to explore further the detail and drama of the bar milieu. (312)

I viewed this preliminary process as exploratory as I attempted to identify key areas of investigation and to better inform the devising of a more structured research strategy. I also wanted to more systematically experience the milieu and social rhythms of the pub place. As I became more focused on the research goals, a research strategy was designed to evaluate pub places and concomitant pub behaviours in the North West and to analyse the significant presence of pubs on the cultural landscape of North West Ireland. Following the pilot scheme, I decided to follow the work of Fairweather and Campbell (1990) who visited 31 rural New Zealand pubs over the course of their ethnographically based research. I sought to gain a general overview of pub culture and pub places, to identify pub types and determine the direction of the research. Over an approximately two and a half year period I conducted the volume of research. During this time I engaged in a systematic, intensive and reflexive mode of fieldwork and interviews, visiting a total of forty-two pubs as an observer and a participant (see Appendix A) and conducting over half of the interviews. Pub visits occurred two to three times per week and could last a few hours or an entire day or evening. I allowed for the research to evolve and expand as broader theoretical concepts such as gender dynamics, community, identity, sense of place and third place were uncovered, which were then integrated into the evolving research plan. I anticipated that the production of rich, descriptive data on the social geography of the pub and a better understanding of pub culture would allow me to have a broad overview of the outer aspect of pub places and pub users.

Observations were recorded through recall as note-taking in the pub place drew attention and was disruptive. These unobtrusive participant-observations were used to determine normal social activity in pubs of various types. Pub types, based on the work of Clinard (1962), were identified from the early stages of the research that examined a variety of pubs at random. Through the identification of pub types I was able to observe the spatial-temporal relationship of pub participants to their environment over an extended period of time and to document the resounding effect this relationship had on their individual and collective identities. Though not used as a basis for analysis, the general categorising of pubs was helpful in the understanding pub places and pub culture. This general typology, however, does provide an introductory model from which to build further research.

Pub categories were largely determined by the informants and were generally described as either rural or rural village, or urban or town. Other pub types included for example, hotel pubs, discos/night clubs, theme pubs (country, Celtic, sports, modern, etc.), country pubs and urban pubs. These categories could further extend to music/singing pubs, locals, restaurant pubs, old man pubs (or 'traditional pubs'), 'skid row' pubs (Clinard, 1962), laddish pubs (or 'man pubs'), business pubs (shop/pubs or funeral home/pubs) and trendy/'cool' pubs. Pub identities were found to be fluid and nuanced and many pubs fell under a number of categories at a particular time of the day or week and/or simultaneously occupied a number of categories (see Appendix B). For example, a hotel in a small town may operate as a 'traditional' pub by day and a trendy disco on the weekend. Correspondingly, pub patrons and behaviours tended to mirror the pub type or types. In one example, tourists, local couples and families occupied a themed 'country' pub (complete with wagon wheels and a wheelbarrow) located in a hotel during the day and early evening. This population moderately consumed pints and engaged in low-key activities such as reading the newspaper, conversation and eating. In the evening, the pub was transformed into a lively disco with floor lighting and an open dance floor where teenagers and young adults consumed mixed drinks while dancing, flirting and singing.

Interviewing

The second main element of the qualitative methods used was depth interviewing. As previously noted, I determined that to build a complete, cohesive picture of the experience of the pub, I needed a research mechanism to formally access the individual conceptualisations and sensations of place experience. Also, the use of interviews within the context of pub culture seemed consistent with the social, convivial nature of the third place of the pub:

> Neutral ground provides the place, and leveling sets the stage for the cardinal and sustaining activity of third places everywhere. Nothing more clearly indicates a third place that the talk there is good; that it is lively, scintillating, colorful, and engaging. The joys of association in third places may initially be marked by smiles and twinkling eyes, by hand-shaking and back-slapping, but they proceed and are maintained in pleasurable and entertaining conversation. (Oldenburg, 1999: 26)

Immersion into a third place and the ensuing conversations facilitated the process of asking questions in the course of everyday interaction.

The focus of this study is on the relationship that forms between pub users and pub places. I believed that in order to fully understand the people/place relationship that takes place in the pub, I needed to gain an understanding of the internal conceptualisations of pub users through a focus on the words of informants and the 'establishment of a human-to-human relation with the respondent and the desire to *understand* rather than *explain*' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 75; Spradley, 1975). Furthermore, in conjunction with participation and observation, I wanted the research to examine and reflect each layer of meaning and understanding to the fullest extent. Therefore pub users became the primary informants and the subjects of the sample. I involved participants in in-depth interviews, the format of which was shaped and reshaped as I learned and uncovered more about each individual place relationship and the broader pub experience. I felt that the establishment of trust and rapport with my informants were important aspects of the interview process as oftentimes informants discussed personal issues such as alcohol consumption and

drinking behaviours and therefore the interview was most appropriate as opposed to, for example, the use of focus groups.

For the purpose of this study, I focused on 'moving to encompass the *hows* of people's lives (the constructive work involved in producing order in everyday life) as well as the traditional *whats* (the activities of everyday life)' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 62). The interview format was devised to encompass characteristics of the sociological interview that I deemed pertinent to this study and included intensive listening and an emphasis on the understanding, knowledge and insights of the interviewees, rather than in categorising people or events in terms of academic theories to allow for the emergence of rich, descriptive and representative data. Moreover, at times I allowed for the content of the interview and the flow and choice of topics to change and reflect what the interviewee knows and feels.

A topic guide (see Appendix C) was used in conjunction with the project themes to develop an interview schedule. The guide was devised to provide a basic structure for the pattern of the interview, but an overall approach of awareness, openness and flexibility meant that the interviews were constantly evolving over the course of the research. The interview was composed of open-ended questions that were designed to allow informants to share any information they believed relevant to their experiences. The topics that were explored with pub users revolved around themes of pubs, place and identity. The interview was formatted so that several main areas of questioning would be covered that included a sense of place, a sense of self and the expression and understanding of the relationship between these two concepts. Firstly, an overview of pub use and routine, pub behaviours and place preferences and meanings were explored to gain an overview of the informant's sense of pub places and included interpretations of the visual culture of the pub; general attitudes concerning time; place and space and community dynamics. The second major theme related to the internal experience of pub places and included the conceptual impact of the pub place on the individual. Questions centred on themes of identities of power, gender and lifestyle as they were situated in the place of the

pub. I examined pub narratives by asking pub users to explore and reflect upon their personal experiences of pub attendance. The final theme focused on the display and expression of experiences and identities in the pub, such as pub users' perceptions of alcohol consumption, drinking habits and lifestyle choices. Overall, I sought to understand how the pub affected the individual, the individual contributed to the construction of the pub and the realisation of these components in the place of the pub.

For the purpose of this project I completed fifty-four in-depth interviews with pub users living in the North West of Ireland. All of the interviews I conducted took place in the North West, although not all of the informants were originally from the region. The interviews were recorded using a mini-disc player with prior informed choice and verbal consent and then transcribed, themed, cross-referenced and analysed. Interviews were typically arranged prior to the meeting, were conducted in private and all participants were ensured confidentiality as ethical considerations were paramount and because alcohol use, drinking habits, pub-based events and issues of identity can be emotive issues. While the majority of interviews were pre-arranged, a small number of impromptu interviews did occur within the place in the pub when the opportunity presented itself and upon the request of the informant. All participants were ensured total anonymity. If requested, identifying features were omitted from the project and all interviews were coded to reveal only the most basic of profile of the participant (first initial, age, gender) and to avoid revealing identity.

Interviews lasted approximately forty-five minutes on average. The longest interview lasted two hours while the shortest interview was completed in just twenty-five minutes. In arranging my interviews, I initially did not select any particular 'type' of participant per se, but instead arranged to meet with volunteers. From there the sample simply snowballed as these contacts often provided me access to their friends, families and acquaintances. The recruitment of informants through participant observations also occurred with regularity. Observations in

particular were drawn on as a source of informants. This snowballing effect was most useful as many informants approached me out of interest to be interviewed over the course of observations. However, I eventually employed some degree of purposeful sampling in an attempt to produce a more varied and representative population of informants on the basis of gender, nationality/ethnicity, age and county of residence (see Appendix D). As well, purposeful sampling provided me with the most control over participant selection as I was at times able to interview those who possessed specific knowledge. As non-drinkers often participate in pub culture in Ireland, for example, I believed it important to include their experiences in the research. This led me to actively seek several non-drinker participants. As a result several non-drinkers, two belonging to the Pioneer Total Abstinence movement, were included in this study.

Although individual experiences cannot be generalised to entire populations, the use of a purposive approach was helpful in building a picture of the nature of pub users' experiences of pub places. Overall, I intend for this analysis to be a broad overview of drinking habits, pub use and an analysis of the existence of a 'third place' in the North West of Ireland. Furthermore, I intend for this thesis to provide a framework suggestive of the population of Ireland as a whole. Therefore, when available I will cite national and international statistics to base the experiences of my informants within the context of the wider culture. While it would be interesting to provide an in-depth exploration and comparison of the experiences of various demographics in the pub place, I decided to provide a general overview of pub participants. The complexities of 'race'/ethnicity, nationality, insider/outsider, class, etc. would require a much bigger study than that which can be achieved for this project. Overall, the broad category of 'pub participant' allowed for a reasonable cross-section of individuals to be included in this study. As a result, the total sample reflects a diversity of age, gender, social class, lifestyle, sexuality and ethnicity in the North West of Ireland.

Ethnographic immersion

In light of a number of new themes that had emerged, a third cycle of research was conducted in the summer and autumn of 2007. Drawing from my background in anthropology, I decided to gain a deeper knowledge of pub places and pub users through an ethnographic immersion into a set number of public houses.

The practice of ethnography has its origins in the anthropological tradition and is aimed at exploring the ways in which people culturally understand, practice and experience their lives. Unlike the earlier models of anthropological fieldwork that focused on the investigation of cultures within a fixed time and space (Arensberg and Kimball, 1968), developments across the social sciences have led a number of anthropologists to resituate and expand the concept of the local into regional, national and global contexts (Chambers, 2003: 400; Marcus, 1998; Appadurai, 1996; Clifford 1986, 1988). This development has both expanded anthropological practice through the inter-linking and adapting of practices from other disciplines (Brady, 2003: 543) and has helped to refocus the investigative eye towards conducting fieldwork 'at home'. The research of Gulliver (1989) and Silverman, for example, explored a community in Ireland using the combined methods of ethnographic immersion, interviews, genealogical research, household surveys and archival research. The goal of this research was to produce a complex and layered understanding of the local within a broader context of time and space:

> we did not wish to restrict our enquiries to the present day – to the particular time during which we engaged in field research; rather, we wished to study social, economic, political and cultural change through a specific period of time – and, again, in its relation to changes at the wider level. As we often explained to the people amongst whom we worked, we sought 'to understand how things have come to be the way they are.' (Gulliver, 1989: 320 – 321)

The ethnographic element of this research was concentrated on developing an intensive, detailed and intimate knowledge of several pub places through regular visits and participation. Fieldwork was used to identify and explore the everyday experience of pub culture, in addition to larger themes such as, for example, the impact of tourism on the local, the construction and expression of Celtic-Tiger and

post-Tiger identities and the production of lifestyle. I believe that this approach, in combination with the other investigative methods, was useful in that it gradually built a broader understanding of pub places and pub culture, which then became increasingly focused, uncovering the more subtle and hidden aspects of the people/place relationship.

In preparation for this stage of the research, I selected three locations that I believed were representative of pub types to gain a more in-depth knowledge through intensive and systematic case studies and ethnographic observations. The selection of more than one pub reflected the multifarious nature of pub culture. I believed that a more detailed observation of several pubs would provide a more complete understanding of pub culture and pub users'.

These three pubs can be identified as a rural traditional pub (Co. Sligo), a large town trendy pub/nightclub (Sligo town) and a large town music pub and venue (Sligo town). The follow-up research provided additional data that was integrated into the final three chapters. I then drew from the pub clientele for further interviews so that I was able to correlate my own experiences of observations and participation to that of the pub users. From these concentrated in-depth studies, I was able to regularly engage a number of key informants comprising of regulars and bar staff. Similarly, other ethnographic studies of the pub discovered place-based informants to be useful:

> [W]e were able to manage the simultaneous identities of researchers and patrons. Helping us do this were a group of regulars with whom both of us felt comfortable. This group included a full-time bartender and five patrons who served as key informants. They actually framed us in these simultaneous identities, and would frequently off observations and insights 'for the paper.' During this time, our relationships strengthened to the extent that they regarded us as regulars and we regarded them as professional observers.... Their insights, clarifications, and explanations are incorporated [in the report]. (Katovich and Reese, 1987: 313)

Becoming a 'regular' enabled a routine access to key informants and a greater familiarity to the rhythm and flow of particular pub environments. In the role of

regular, I was granted additional access to pub places and pub users', which resulted in an increased understanding of the people/place relationship.

Phase I (pilot project) September 2004 – December 2004
- Attended three pubs approximately two to three times per week for participant observations
- Conducted twelve interviews
- Transcription of interviews and data analysis

Phase II January 2005 – June 2007
- Attended forty-two pubs (including those from the pilot project) approximately two to four times per week for participant observations
- Conducted twenty-eight interviews
- Transcription of interviews and data analysis

Phase III August 2007 – December 2007
- Attended three pubs selected from sample approximately two to four times per week for ethnographic immersion
- Conducted fourteen interviews from three field sites
- Transcription of interviews and data analysis

Table 1 Phases of research.

Visual materials

The use of photography in this project emerged from the idea to capture and explore the ways in which pub spaces are used and to record some of the material features of the pub described in this research. The images document several aspects of the people/place relationship: the material and visual culture of the pub, the social experience of pub culture and the relationship of pub users' to the pub environment. The photographs should be viewed as accompaniments to the text and as providing additional illustrative material from which to interpret the analysis.

Data analysis

The blending of several methods over time and space was deemed appropriate and purposeful to the overall research process as it evolved. The in-depth observations allowed me to intensively integrate myself into the broader pub culture of the North West in the role of researcher. In doing so, I attended a large number of pubs over an extended period of time while simultaneously engaging in extensive background research. As noted, observational field notes were drafted (usually by hand) from memory to yield detailed, 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) and allowed for a more fluid, layered description of the pub experiences to emerge. From this I was able to identify key issues which contributed to the further development of my interview strategy and analysis, and eventually, the process of intensive, ethnographic studies. Through the analysis process, I allowed theory to emerge from the data while linking and comparing concepts and themes. Phenomenological approaches were useful in the project's grounded approach towards analysis where I allowed for the words of informants to 'reveal their own thematic meaning-organization' by remaining 'open to their guidance and speaking, their disclosure, when we attend to them' (von Eckartsberg, 1998: 29).

This system was ultimately self-generating, with each component feeding into the next and resulting in an increasingly detailed and intimate knowledge of pub places and pub users. Recording, transcribing and categorising data also became integrated into this cycle. Data was sorted to detect, identify and compare key themes and to link up various connections. The thematic outline, as described in the preceding chapter, was applied to the development of a coding structure that encompassed, namely: informant narrative; alcohol use and consumption habits; participation in pub culture and pub behaviours; experience of place; conception, construction and expression of lifestyle and 'lifestyle measures' (Gruenwald, 1995, 2000); and community. These categories were then cross-referenced and linked to broader themes of identity, place experience and sense of place.

'Drinking beliefs' was another important theme that I used throughout my analysis. Drinking beliefs refers to the conceptual understanding that drives an individual to partake in a particular 'style' of drinking. This belief system directs and supports an individual's decision-making concerning drinking behaviour and drinking choices. These beliefs influence individual behaviour in regards to assuming control over the participant's immediate internal and external environment and provide a conceptual framework to base their experiences in. Furthermore, this understanding serves as a guide to individual decisions relating to the selection of a drinking location, the type of beverage consumed (brand, variety, etc.), the amount of beverage consumed, preference of drinking partner(s), what one regards as light, heavy and moderate drinking, etc. As well, drinking beliefs not only influence individual behaviour, but also provide the individual with a conceptual framework in which to form and maintain general ideological principles concerning drinking and pub use (for example, what constitutes acceptable behaviour concerning women and the use of alcohol).

My informants demonstrated an extensive scope of drinking beliefs as well as a wide range of conceptual conclusions resulting from their experiences with alcohol and public houses. Among my informants, drinking habits ranged on a spectrum from complete abstinence, to infrequent and light drinking, to regular and heavy alcohol consumption, to intermittent binge drinking.

Another concept, 'conceptualisation of the self', refers to individual perceptions of identity, identity construction, and the relationship of identity to the external environment. External environment includes family, group membership, culture, local community and the broader social environment (i.e. regional, national, European, global). This directs an individual to experience and interact with their environment in a particular manner. For example, this theme considers why individuals choose to drink in particular locations while avoiding others, and asks how individuals might use drinking behaviours and pub attendance to establish a

sense of self (for example, the popularity of drinking specific brands of alcohol or types of drink among particular social groups).

'Sense of place' was also used as an important theme for the purposes of this project. Sense of place examines how the individual perceives and relates to the community. It explores an individual's sense of the aesthetic.[15] As related to this is the concept of the 'third place'. The experience of the third place considers the relationship between drinking beliefs, the conceptualisation of the self and the sense of place. Ultimately, within the context of this project, this theme explores the possibility of the pub as a genuine third place.

Reflexivity

As I engaged with the research, my previous experience with pub culture allowed me privileged access and insight into the phenomenon. It took a careful and reflexive process to fully tease out the implications of the presence of prior knowledge as the project developed. My methodological approach acknowledged the social world of the researcher and the fact that it impacts on the research study and potentially impacts on the interpretative lens. Rather than trying to minimise the impact of that world, I chose to maximise the opportunities it presented in addressing the research question.

Another area of the research experience that warranted consideration was my nationality, which I found to be both beneficial and inconvenient. As an American, it was often assumed I was a tourist. From my observations and conversations, the presence or absence of tourists can influence the behaviour of the pub staff and patronage. On more than one occasion on entering a pub traditional Irish music was suddenly piped in through the sound system, replacing the top 40 music station or sports commentary that was previously heard in the background. As a result, I

[15] See Hepburn's (2001) 'Knowing (aesthetically) where I am,' for a further discussion of this philosophical concept.

made it a point to enter pubs with Irish friends and neighbours unless it was a regular pub where it was known that I wasn't a tourist but a long term resident. However, I also found my 'blow-in' status and my nationality to be useful on a number of occasions. Although it is not uncommon for an American to live in Ireland, to meet an American who has lived in rural Ireland for an extended period of time and who is married to an Irish man garnered great curiosity and a willingness to talk. My nationality, while at times a hindrance, could be an advantage because few assumptions were made concerning my level of understanding. Initially, I was concerned that my time in Ireland was not enough to interpret subtle references, gestures and other signifiers of community and identity. However, for any researcher to experience place as an insider is improbable. The use of several methods helped me to become attuned to the spatial rhythm of the pub and sense for myself an experience of regularity and *habitus*. After some time in the field and with a degree of hyper-vigilance in self-awareness and reflexivity, I conceded that my outsider but familiar status alerted me to a number of observations and also helped me to maintain critical perspective. That said, all participating researchers are faced with the possibility of 'going native' (Flick, 1998: 223). I believed it was essential to maintain reflexivity during the course of this research, particularly due to the intimate nature of this type of study, the use of alcohol on site and the ease with which one can become easily integrated into third places. Because of this, I was conscious of my alcohol consumption while engaged in observations.

Another consideration during this research was my own profile in the field which included issues such as gender during the interview process and other elements such as social status and age (Gluck and Patai, 1991). As previously noted, the gendered role of the observer and the masculine environment of the pub led to, at times, difficulty with access to pub culture. My selection of individual pubs for observations was certainly influenced by the degree of this characteristic. Entering into highly masculinised environments could be, at times, intimidating. I simply felt that specific pubs, particularly early-opening pubs and other hyper-

masculinised drinking houses, were largely inaccessible as there were literally no other females in attendance and the environments felt distinctly hostile towards women. I took into account that anthropologist Ann Whitehead's (1976) attempt at participant observation in a rural English pub in the late 1960s, The Waggoner, was nearly abandoned when she was denied access and intimidated by regulars. She resolved her fieldwork dilemma of female exclusion by finding refuge among the female regulars and becoming 'adopted' by their group, which 'proved to be the facilitating formula' (176 – 179). She described her exposure and experience of sexism and aggression during her fieldwork as 'extreme and brutal' (169). Fortunately, over the course of my fieldwork I never encountered the overt hostility that Whitehead did or witness extreme sexual aggression like Campbell and Philips (1995). Nor did I spend much time in 'skid row' or seedy pubs like Thompsom (1985) in his study of the Hell's Angels where he was horrifically assaulted by his informants towards the end of his research. While it would have been interesting to provide data on these hyper-masculinised, anti-social/deviant environments, I was investigating the role of the pub as a third place and these pub types were atypical, and were not the focus of this research.

Limitations of research

Limitations for any particular research study are inevitable and can influence the extent to which useful meaning can be derived in relation to the phenomenon being studied. It was anticipated that the strategic use of an exploratory pilot project early on in the research and the development of an open and reflexive manner of the research process would somewhat minimise limitations. Moreover, although all methodological approaches have strengths and weakness, the use of several research methods, it was hoped, somewhat superseded the shortcomings of the application of a single approach. Furthermore, the rigorous practice of reviewing data and linking key themes allowed for a continuous process of relating the findings of the analysis and cross-referencing data so as to reduce the possibility of

inconsistency, a common criticism of qualitative research methodologies (Silverman, 2000: 9 – 11).

Ethical considerations

It is essential when conducting social research to identify potential ethical dilemmas and find the best solution possible. The ethical implications of observations, particularly those of a covert nature, must be addressed. Today, covert fieldwork is considered controversial and unacceptable, with the exception of everyday, public places where informed consent would be impossible to obtain. In the place of the pub, covert observations were used on many occasions. However, a number of key informants knew of my status and I never attempted to conceal my role as a researcher in conversation with patrons.

In order to maintain high ethical standards I provided a verbalised informed consent at the beginning of each interview. As well, I assured informants that their identities would be kept anonymous and acknowledged that all observations of individuals belonged to them. Informed choice (receiving consent by the informant following a full and honest disclosure about the research) *and* informed consent were obtained prior to interviews. Participants were told that they had informed choice throughout the interview process and always had the option to defer questions or discontinue the interview.

The interviews took place in a variety of settings that included private locations such as homes or offices, or, if it was suggested by the participant, public places were also used, such as cafés and pubs. However, if sensitive information emerged the interview would be moved to a more private location, which occurred on several occasions. Confidentiality was assured to all participants. A number of informants were especially concerned about anonymity due to the nature of the discussion – issues of alcohol use or descriptions of incidents involving alcohol consumption of themselves, family members, friends or acquaintances - therefore a

right to privacy was guaranteed to all participants. The use of a recorder only occurred with full disclosure and consent and was not used during observational fieldwork. Permission was sought from bar staff for photographs of pub interiors, while pictures that include images of people, with the exception of public events such as a music performance, were taken with permission and the understanding that they may be used in this thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified and demonstrated the emergent and pluralistic nature of the research process. The objective of obtaining a deeper understanding of pubs and pub users' necessitated observation and participation in pub places as well as interviews. I wanted to discover both the inside experience by relying on the words of key informants and the external experience through observing pub culture.

Having described the methodological approaches for this research, the following chapters present the findings of this investigation as outlined in the introductory chapter and chapter one. Primary data is introduced in chapter five and incorporated into the analysis of chapters six, seven and eight.

Chapter Three: *Place, Identity and Irish Drinking Culture*

Introduction

The Irish pub has become a national institution celebrated for its reputed hospitality both at home and abroad. The centrality of the public house and the subsequent use of alcohol have been an integral feature of Irish cultural discourse as evidenced in folklore, stories, songs, poems, theatre, visual art, historical accounts and ethnographies. Primary to understanding the institution of the Irish pub, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of one of the more important activities that occur on premises – alcohol consumption.

The link between alcohol and other substances of transcendence (such as tobacco, caffeine or other stimulants) is a common feature of the third place. Critical to understanding the role of the pub in Ireland is the exploration of the social uses of alcohol and its relationship to place. Uniquely, alcohol consumption in Ireland has been primarily located outside of the home and situated within the public house. The relationship of the social use of alcohol to the development of pub culture plays a prevalent role in the production and maintenance of the Irish third place:

> The unique potential of the public drinking establishment to become a third place or core setting of informal public life derives from a fundamental synergism that comes into play wherever alcoholic beverages are part of a culture. (Oldenburg, 1999: 167)

The object of this chapter is to investigate historical 'archaeologies' relevant to the sociological understanding of alcohol consumption and the relationship of drinking behaviours to the Irish pub. Archaeologies, a Foucauldian concept, describes a form of historical research used to unearth suppressed, hidden or lost discourses within a society. Through the exploration of various historical narratives and discourses this chapter will provide new insights into the development of Irish alcohol practices, pub attendance and provide a basis for a discussion on the origin of the public house as a third place, which will be discussed in chapter four.

This chapter will also examine the ways in which Irish drinking habits influenced the formation of contemporary Irish identity and how this phenomenon is fundamentally related to the primary site of alcohol consumption. Overall, I will investigate the link between the cultural use of alcohol to facilitate and maintain the formation of social networks, the social construction of the Irish pub and the origin of this quintessential third place. The relationship between the use of alcohol and pub space for the construction of identities will be introduced. Conclusively, the following chapters will demonstrate that alcohol use and the public house are not pre-existing entities, but instead objects constructed through the discourse that encompasses them. Overall, I will explore the means through which this institution thrives as a social organism as opposed to functioning purely as a site of social interaction. Finally, it is through the concept of pubs acting as 'venues for the expression of social relations' (Hey, 1986: 39) that I will examine the evolving relationship of drinking practices and place in Ireland.

Irish drinking patterns

The cultural consumption of alcohol is significant in that it provides an array of social and psychological functions, reveals specific internalised cultural attitudes and meanings and is ultimately 'part of a larger cultural configuration' (Mandelbaum, 2000: 15). Social scientists characterise alcohol as a culturally defined object and suggest that the attitudes towards its use are socially manufactured.[1] George Maddox argues that cultural variations in drinking patterns are a result of 'historically created and shared designs for living which serve as potential guides to behaviour' (1962: 241). In his analysis of British pub culture, Tom Harrison (1943) similarly concluded that 'the functions performed by alcohol in one culture are related to the whole cultural system and find meaning in that context' (15).

[1] See Pittman (1967); Gefou-Medianou (1992); Marshall (2000) for further discussions on this concept.

Although the effects of alcohol upon the individual have been found to be physiologically consistent, 'the behavioural consequences of drinking alcohol depend as much on a people's idea of what alcohol does to a person as they do on the physiological processes that take place' (Mandelbaum, 2000: 17). Culturally influenced attitudes contribute to the individual experience of alcohol consumption and unconsciously guide drinking behaviours. The quantity and quality of alcohol consumed, the type of beverage taken, the manner in which alcohol is ingested (for example the speed of consumption, drink consumption in the presence or absence of food, the length of the drinking period, etc.), the intent of alcohol use, the space and place of alcohol purchasing and intake and the situation in which the drinking will occur are types of behaviours that are informed by social understandings of alcohol and its uses. Revealingly, these same culturally manufactured conceptualisations also largely determine individual experience of the intoxicant as well as the individual's social expression of the effects of alcohol: 'whether the contents of the cup will cheer or stupefy, whether they will induce affection or aggression, guilt or unalloyed pleasure' (Mandelbaum, 2000: 17). Accordingly, Mandelbaun notes:

> Alcohol is a cultural artefact; the form and meanings of drinking alcoholic beverages are culturally defined.... The form is usually quite explicitly stipulated, including the kind of drink that can be used, the amount and rate of intake, the time and place of drinking, the accompanying ritual, the sex and age of the drinker, the roles involved in drinking. (2000: 15)

Alcohol use in Ireland

Considerable analysis has been generated concerning the use of alcohol in Ireland and within diaspora communities from a multitude of perspectives including bio-medical, social and psychological. Social scientists and historians such as Bales (1944, 1946), O'Connor (1978) and Stivers (2002) argue that, initially, high levels of drinking and alcoholism found throughout the Irish diaspora resulted from poverty and extensive cultural breakdown, an outcome of famine and forced emigration. Yet historical accounts suggest that immigrant drinking patterns were a continuation of similar behaviours found throughout the communal practices of

the Irish peasantry. According to social historian James Barrett, the 'importance of drink in the culture of the Irish peasant and small farmer makes its central position in the life of the immigrant more understandable' (1977: 156). In his analysis of Irish drinking customs, Barrett concludes:

> 'Paddy' the drunken Irishman has assumed a prominent place in the folklore of ethnicity. Although a caricature, he symbolises a historical reality: the general inclination toward drink in the Irish subcultures of nineteenth century British and American industrial cities. (1977: 155)

Robert Bales (1944) suggests that the intimate involvement of alcohol in the lifecycle of the 19th century Irish peasant began in early childhood. Significant life events included the participation of the community and involved generous amounts of alcohol that was provided by the family to its guests, which in turn signified social status, generosity towards the community and social cohesion. The consumption of alcohol was used as a social lubricant, facilitating the growth of economic relationships, maintaining bonding and bridging networks among males and providing a levelling device for the development of social capital within a rural community. As a result, the secular use of alcohol with the intention of jollification and oftentimes inebriation was exceedingly common at many of the rural fairs, dances, festivals and market days that took place throughout the year. As a result, alcohol consumption evolved as a constant presence at every significant rite of passage and celebratory occasion in the lifecycle of the Irish peasant. Joyce O'Connor, in her extensive study of cultural influences on the drinking customs of Irish youths, notes that '[e]very new stage of life was celebrated through the extensive use of alcohol, which almost took the form of an initiation rite' (1978: 49).[2] However, Bales argues that the symbolic use of alcohol that accompanied spiritual activities was strictly segregated from celebratory drinking outside of

[2] According to anthropologist Robbie David-Floyd, a ritual is 'a powerful didactic and socialising tool' (1992: 9). One could argue that alcohol as an object, the act of consumption *and* the behaviours associated with intoxication are highly symbolic. Clifford Geertz defines a symbol as 'any object, act, event, quality, or relation that serves as a vehicle for conception – the conception is the symbol's meaning' (1973: 93).

ritual[3], which was practised by the laity for purposes of maintaining community membership and building and extending social capital:

> The drinking on these occasions was convivial, not part of the ritual ... though it had a social meaning. He who offered liberally was regarded as a 'good fellow', and his offering implied that he regarded the other as a 'good fellow'. The exchange was thus symbolic of social solidarity and acceptability on both sides, but was without explicit religious meaning. (1962: 158)

The separation of sacred and secular alcohol use in Irish Catholic culture helped to formalise conflicting conceptual attitudes towards drinking. This feature is succinctly illustrated in a brief cross-cultural comparison of drinking cultures. A comparison of Irish and Jewish drinking habits, a common model for the cultural exploration of alcohol use, can be used to analyse the culture of alcohol consumption found in Ireland. For example, while the Jewish tradition developed to include a social framework for the use of alcohol, the lack of an institutionalised cultural regulatory mechanism in the Irish drinking tradition has been identified as the causative factor in the apparent excessiveness of Irish drinking habits.

Jewish culture developed permissive attitudes towards alcohol where its use became integrated, normalised and controlled through the institution of the family in conjunction with a cultural discourse that restricted alcohol use to a specific social context *based within the domestic*.[4] As a result, 'protective features [such] as early exposure to dilute alcoholic beverages within the family, parental acceptance of moderate drinking, and the use of alcohol as a food to be taken in moderation with meals' were developed (Pittman, 1967: 10). Within this cultural context, moderate and controlled alcohol use within the family structure during mealtimes,

[3] Sacramental wine was and continues to be administered and controlled exclusively by the priest during rituals of Mass. Because the product of consumption (wine) differed greatly from the common alcoholic beverages of the time (beer, spirits), that it was blessed for the purpose of ritual use and that this use was restricted to the clergy resulted in a conceptual difference from the everyday drinking practices in the community or the drinking that occurred following religious rituals (such as baptisms, confirmations, weddings, pilgrimages, saint's days and other religious days).

[4] The use of alcohol in Jewish ritual often comprises of the entire family unit. The tradition of Passover, for example, includes the shared reading of religious text around the family table while ritually drinking wine accompanied by a large meal.

in combination with ritualised use of alcohol in religious services, acted to socialise children towards more temperate attitudes in regards to drinking:

> It has been suggested that learning to drink in the context of family and religious rituals acted as a protecting factor, making Jews moderate drinkers, while lack of family rituals and the tendency for bar drinking combined with economic frustration made 'alcoholism' and excessive drinking acceptable among the Irish. (Gefou-Madianou, 1992: 4)

Whereas some cultures incorporated moderate alcohol use into day-to-day life, the Irish peasant tradition developed an ambiguity and excessiveness towards its consumption, Irish drinking culture became attached to a space outside of the domestic that was embedded in the social networks of the community. This characteristic led to the association of drinking behaviours to group solidarity and community identity and inevitably lead to an increased use of alcohol consumption.

A culture of ambiguity

By the turn of the 18th century, drunkenness was perceived by the colonial government in Ireland and by many individual community leaders (including members of the clergy) to be a severe and disruptive social problem. The Irish Catholic Church initiated a number of short lived abstinence movements in the 18th and 19th centuries, until the late 1800s when the church officially began to take an active interest in temperance campaigns. As a result, the Pioneer League of Total Abstinence of the Sacred Heart Association was founded in 1901 by Father James Cullen and officially sanctioned by the Catholic Church. Cullen eschatologically aligned alcohol consumption with moral weakness and sin (and curiously, the British[5]), curiously reflecting a more evangelical anti-drinking ideology. The Pioneer movement became relatively successful throughout the rural population as a result of its fundamentally Catholic dogma:

[5] Although officially an apolitical movement, Father Cullen 'used the political life of the people as a spur to changing their drinking habits. Drink was seen as the main enemy of the people and the reason for losing encounters with the British' (O'Connor, 1978: 66). The link of sobriety to identities of nationalism re-emerged in the North during the 'Troubles'. The Pioneers, according to O'Connor, 'linked religion, sacrifice, and patriotism with abstinence ... It gave the individual respectability, honesty, and integrity, and placed him [sic] in society' (1978: 68).

> The values of religion, sacrifice, and love of the Sacred Heart were of utmost importance. In this way it was a specifically religious contribution towards a solution. It was a form of Catholic asceticism, otherworldly in its aims, and was confined to the spiritual elite … (O'Connor, 1978: 68)

The Pioneers recruited non-drinkers and moderate drinkers 'who would give up the use of alcohol as a sacrifice to the Sacred Heart to make reparation for the sins of intemperance' (O'Connor, 1978: 65). The campaign provided an identity of virtue and the status of martyrdom for its members through the encouragement of individual asceticism as a form of sacrifice for the common good. The movement associated sobriety with personal spiritual victory, while also promoting tolerance towards drinking in others. Contributing to its success, Cullen instituted a ritualised process that awarded the pledged with membership into an exclusive social network of non-drinkers:

> The process of becoming a member was one in which the individual passed through a *rite de passage* after a probationary period. This being successful, membership of the group was for life. (O'Connor, 1978: 65)

In addition to a formalised pledge to lifelong sobriety, membership was signified by Pioneer pins and reinforced through meetings and exclusive social events, providing individuals with access to new modes of social networking. The Pioneer pin (see *figure 10*), for example, was until recently a powerful sign of ethnic and religious (Catholic) identity in Northern Ireland. One research participant recalled a childhood experience of a sectarian assault he endured while walking home one evening in central Belfast (B60M). His assailants identified him by the display of the Pioneer pin on his lapel.

Fig.10 Pioneer lapel pin.

Non-drinkers were now provided with a legitimate identity of status and became situated in a drinking culture in which social capital could be accessed while maintaining a commitment to sobriety. As opposition to alcohol consumption was not considered necessary for in-group membership, Pioneers, whose realisations of abstinence were spiritually redemptive for the entire community, could congregate and fraternise freely with drinkers in various sites of social capital. Ultimately, it was suggested that through individual renunciation spiritual amends would be made on behalf of drinkers and eventually drunkenness would no longer occur. As a result, the Pioneer movement contributed to the creation of a cultural paradox, in which an institution of abstinence was highly valued, while a large proportion of the population continued to participate in excessive and socially unrestricted drinking. With the creation of opposing yet coupled identities of drinking behaviours and in the absence of formalised rituals to control alcohol consumption, Irish culture developed conflicting attitudes towards drinking. This, in addition to the ideological knowledges created by Cullen and advanced through the Pioneer movement, resulted in an even greater ambiguity towards alcohol consumption.

Cross-cultural similarities and differences

Despite a great deal of evidence that portrayed the Irish as heavy drinkers, pertinent questions arose which interrogated whether the Irish had an unusual relationship with alcohol, or if the immoderate use of alcohol became an overly-applied stereotype integrated into colonial discourse. Although a historical relationship with heavy alcohol consumption clearly did exist in Ireland, it was remarkably similar to drinking traditions found among the populations of England and Scotland. O'Connor, in her cross-cultural evaluation of drinking habits in England and Ireland finds 'extensive usages and customs ... [of alcohol] in English society were commonplace in Ireland' (1978: 45). Although O'Connor notes that in Ireland 'drunkenness was common and there appeared to be little or no strictures placed on [alcohol] use from the 15th century onwards,' she also admits '[d]rinking

was a problem in both countries at the time ... contrary to what people thought, these customs were extensive and common in England, Ireland, and Scotland' (1978: 45). In *Hair of the Dog: Irish Drinking and Its American Stereotype* (1985), Richard Stivers also reports similarities in drinking customs between the Irish, Scottish and British. Although Stivers does not contest the fact that historically, the Irish consumed excessive amounts of alcohol, he does not believe Irish drinking customs to have been especially unique. Stivers strongly argues that evidence of cross-cultural drinking similarities was largely neglected in a number of studies, which led to an over-emphasis of Irish drinking habits. This biased tendency resulted from decades of widespread ethnic stereotyping and anti-Irish bigotry and ultimately led to a distortion of data (see *figure 11*). He further suggests that Bale's much-cited analysis of Irish drinking overlooked a number of discrepancies[6] and was therefore biased in its conclusions.

Fig.11 Anti-Irish propaganda (The Great Irish Famine Guide, n.d.).

[6] For example, as noted by Tanya Cassidy (1997) in her study *Alcohol in Ireland: an Irish solution*, Bales used data provided by W.R. Dawson as basis for his argument concerning high levels of alcohol consumption in Ireland, yet he disregarded Dawson's assertion that these levels might have

Geraldine Moane, a psychologist who has investigated the effects of colonisation on Irish identity, notes the 'propagation of stereotypes of the colonised as inferior and as possessing undesirable traits and conversely, of the coloniser as superior and possessing desirable traits' as a common tactic of colonial control (1994: 257).[7] This practice is illustrated by Dermot Walsh in his discussion of Irish alcoholism when he acknowledges that many reports of alcohol use in Ireland were embellished, and that '[n]o doubt some of these pictures of Irish drinking were exaggerated for literary effect by people such as Barrington and heightened by the natural antagonism of English visitors' (in Marshall, 2000: 396). Notably, O'Connor also admits that 'many visitors to the country in the eighteenth century noticed that the excessive drinking, which they were led to believe was part of the Irish culture, was not as prevalent as had been asserted' (1978: 47).

While excessive alcohol use also occurred throughout Scotland and England, drinking behaviours were heavily emphasised in the imagery of the Irish. The construction of alcohol consumption as a signifier of Irish identity was initially propagated by colonial discourse subjecting them to outsider status within their own country. As a result, 'false and demeaning stereotypes of inferiority' became internalised and national identity was co-opted as a form of colonial control (Moane, 1994: 253). In his discussion of colonial identity, Hall notes that 'this inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms ... this idea of otherness as an inner compulsion changes our conception of 'cultural identity' (2002: 395). Hall argues that a 'loss of identity' is a 'traumatic character of the "colonial experience"' (2002: 394). This phenomenon corresponds with Moane's assertion that this particular form of colonial subjugation 'is associated with difficulties of identity and also with a sense of inferiority and self-hatred' (1994: 257). These attitudes were later exported to sites of forced emigration, where it became medicalised and institutionalised:

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appeared high due to the 'more effective policing of the rural districts and small towns' during an unstable period of colonial Ireland (1944: 11).

> The first signs of 'alcohol problems' were identified among Irish migrants in the USA. When this association (Irish and alcohol) was established, many researchers, including ethnographers, started focusing on the 'Irish drinking problem'. (Gefou-Madianou, 1992: 4)

As Irish identity continued to fragment, economic hardship and severe famine precipitated a further breakdown of traditional cultural structures through mass emigration and a dramatic reduction of rural communities.[8] Internalised stereotypes of inferiority, although negative and identifying as the 'other', provided a sense of collective identity in a subjugated population. Combined with a lack of social institutions to regulate drinking and general attitudes of ambiguity towards the use of alcohol, uninhibited drinking developed as a mechanism to cope with a number of social conditions. As a result, the social and psychological effects of colonialism and institutionalised drinking traditions contributed to a unique interplay of circumstances that began to differentiate the drinking habits of the Irish that developed in 19th century Ireland. Ultimately, a complex set of social relations acted to differentiate those spaces where drinking occurred.

Additionally, the onset of the Famine and the subsequent emigration led to a disproportionate ratio of women to men in the Irish countryside[9], particularly in the West of Ireland. The depopulation of rural areas resulted in community breakdown, social alienation and fragmentation and new relationships to space and place. Changes in domestic and workspace led to the disruption and reconfiguration of the construction of identities. For much of the remaining rural population access to sites of identity became limited to both males and females under new modes of land distribution and family restructuring. As a result,

[7] See Liz Curtis (1985) *Nothing But the Same Old Story: the roots of anti-Irish racism* for a detailed account of racist imperial ideology and anti-Irish propaganda.

[8] Inglis notes that '[m]ore than one and a half million people emigrated from Ireland before the Famine. During the Famine, 801,000 emigrants were reported and over a million in the five years that following it' (2003: 165).

[9] Women were restricted to the domestic sphere, with marriage as the only viable option for many. Because the majority of eligible bachelors were older men and with the prospect of having to share a household with in-laws, many women to opted for emigration.

conventional routes to achieving social identity and status and power within key social networks were denied to many:

> Traditional status arrangements in the community had been upended by a series of dramatic changes in Irish society. Single inheritance meant that many males were left without land, the customary means of support. The economic status of those unfortunate enough not to acquire land was in jeopardy. Intertwined with inheritance was, of course marriage. Relatively few married, so many were denied this social status. Work and marriage as statuses for the individual have long been crucial sources of identity. That so many were systematically denied the historical responsibilities expected of all was nothing less than a collective crisis of identity. What was a man if not a landowner, a farmer, a husband, and a father? (Stivers, 2002: 92)

According to Stivers, '[t]o compensate the large number of unmarried males, the status of marriage was devalued and that of the single state revalued' (2002: 80). This phenomenon led to the culmination of an extreme masculine dynamic in an already male-dominated, yet emasculated, cultural hierarchy. As gender identity underwent a dramatic transformation, colonial hegemonies continued to influence the conceptualisation of masculinity. Moane suggests that this 'polarisation between masculinity and femininity' was a residual of colonial manipulation[10] and resulted in gender relations that were particularly problematic (1994: 258):

> Since the main source of identity and esteem for any society arises out of identification with and pride in national achievements, this equation of indigenous with feminine in the colonial context adds a further problem, give that most societies regard the feminine as inferior. (Moane, 1994: 258)

Moane concluded that these imposed conceptualisation of gender roles '[led] to rejection of femininity and an over-valuing of qualities considered masculine – 'aggression, achievement, control, competition and power' (1994: 260). Over time, colonial powers came to acknowledge to usefulness of Catholic authority and gradually relinquished this responsibility to the Irish Catholic Church:

[10] In an attempt to emasculate any threat to colonial authority, traditional gender roles, gender identity and sexuality became deliberately distorted. Moane notes: 'the colonised are rendered both childlike and "feminine" through the assignment to them of attributes such as passivity, intellectual inferiority, dependence, and excessive emotionality. In contrast, the colonisers are seen as adult and "masculine". Furthermore, the culture of the colonised country and the country itself is seen as feminine, a pattern particularly obvious in the Irish context' (1994: 255).

> By the middle of the eighteenth century British politicians had begun to realise that the attempt to abolish Catholicism in Ireland through persecution had failed ... [and] it was soon realised that, as Lecky puts it, 'the higher Catholic clergy, if left in peace, were able and willing to render inestimable services to the Government.' ... It was at this stage that a tentative power alliance began to be formed between the British state and the Catholic Church. As long as the Irish could be dissuaded from bloody rebellion and became civil and disciplined, it did not matter so much who produced the results. (Inglis, 1998: 113)

As the government ceded social control to the Catholic Church, the emergence of 'Irish Puritanism' in the 19th century provided ideological sanctions to manage individual behaviour and enabled the Catholic Church to monitor public and private space with the co-operation of church, family and community. Various social institutions such as schools, families and the private home were appropriated to enforce extensive gender segregation and chastity outside of marriage. According to Larkin, 'devotional Catholicism filled a void in Irish society – that of identity – brought about by decline of the traditional culture. In that sense devotional Catholicism [from which the Pioneer movement emerged] represented a new culture' (Stivers, 2002: 61). In this new position the Church gained power over individuals, families and communities through the creation of new spaces, such as intensively gendered spaces and the permeation of sacred spaces into public and private life and extensive monitoring, control and punishment within both public and private places.

A disproportionate population of males, combined with extensive gender segregation, the devaluation of marriage and strong taboos forbidding pre-marital sex led to a prevalence of all-male social groups that congregated outside of the home. Bachelor groups provided men with an opportunity to develop intimate relationships away from the tensions of the domestic space that was free of the monitoring of the Church. Bachelor drinking groups reinforced gender segregation and allowed for an activity - alcohol consumption - that was not forbidden by the religious authority. Barrett argues to 'forestall sexual relations, social segregation was encouraged; when they were not working the boys gathered for recreation,

frequently involving drink' (1977: 24). As single males in particular were alienated from the family, the drinking activities that occurred within bachelor groups provided an alternative sub-culture that legitimatised each member's status and identity apart from the social institutions that restricted them. Pittman finds the 'Irish male's drinking [was] disassociated from the network of religious ideas and furthermore, [was] not part of the family's usual social routines' (1967: 9). In addition to providing an environment of emotional and social intimacy and security outside of the home place and work place (in rural areas, the domestic was the work place), the male drinking groups offered individuals ownership over an alternative site of relaxation and leisure:

> Not merely the need for sexual adjustment but also general emotional and recreational needs were provided for within the bachelor group. For men it provided a context for all nonwork and nonfamily activities. (Stivers, 2002: 80 – 81)

As the customary avenues for establishing identity and achieving adult status were denied to many rural Irish men, Stivers suggests that:

> Hard drinking, which occasionally becomes exacerbated in the forms of drunkenness and alcoholism, might be viewed as an attempt to reaffirm one's identity in times of collective and individual crisis. The collective crisis in the first instance was one of status. (2002: 92)

As a result, the all-male drinking party became an institutionalised reference group and 'drinking was considered an important masculine attribute' (Pritchard, 1985: 3). Bachelor groups implicitly provided a kind of informal rite of passage into adult masculine society:[11]

[11] Davis-Floyd describes a rite of passage as a 'series of rituals designed to conduct an individual (or group) from one social state or status to another' (1992: 17). She suggests that a rite of passage acts to reconceptualise and reposition the individual within a hegemonic framework, 'thereby effecting the transformations both in society's perceptions of the individual and in the individual's perception of her- or himself' (1992: 17). The function of a rite is to: 'convey, through the emotions of the body, a series of repetitious and unforgettable messages to the initiate concerning the core values of the society into which he or she is being initiated through the carefully structured manipulation of appropriately representative symbols, and thereby integrate those value, as well as the basic premises of the belief system on which they are base, into the inmost being of the initiate.... To renew and revitalize these values for those conducting, as well as for those participating in or merely watching, the rituals through which these transformations are effected, so that both the perpetuation and the vitality of the belief and value system of the society in questions can be assured' (1992:18).

> The bachelor group is an interesting phenomenon which arises out of the great number of single males and the lack of common interests between men and women. In this group, differences are not made according to age. At one time it had recognised leaders. These leaders were usually married men who had in some exceptional way in the past, either in sport or politics or whose imagination was lively enough to capture the interest of the younger people. They handed on much of the folklore of the community and often expanded and added to it. They were the ones who *initiated* the young people into the attitudes of the group. (McNabb in Stivers, 2002: 88) (emphasis added)

The activity of alcohol consumption within a peer group worked symbolically to demonstrate friendship and facilitate bonding, thus generating social capital among a socially limited group, which Inglis describes as 'not constituting solely in and through a social exchange of drinks. It is developed within *a much wider network of social relations*' (1998: 171) (emphasis added). Drinking groups were a manifestation of both bonding and bridging networks, while the act of drinking facilitated group relations. Arensberg and Kimball noted this phenomenon in rural Ireland as late as the 1930s as they observed the widespread practice of 'treating' in which the men seemed:

> to find companionship and security and this was expanded and strengthened by the practice.... [Arensberg and Kimball] saw drinking in a group as a symbolic reaffirmation of solidarity and equality among males in the area that they investigated. (O'Connor, 1978: 46)

The solidarity of the peer group was reinforced and strengthened through the activity of group drinking, which became ritualised through habitual treating. Stivers interpreted the practice of treating as an opportunity to assert masculinity and affirm identity through an established reference group:

> Treating was a norm of equality in that, as a ritual of masculine renewal, it made all bachelor-group members – whatever their age and even class differences – equal as men. As a norm of equality and solidarity, treating was a reaffirmation of status differences between men and women that even marriage did not break down.... The norm of treating, then, provided for the constant renewal of manliness in the form of a rite of incorporation: the drinking together by bachelor-group members. (2002: 90 – 91)

Barrett noted 'to accept a treat obliged one to buy a round of drinks for all those within the group,' however, 'refusal to accept a drink was sure to cause resentment'

(1977: 24). Alcohol consumption operated as a temporary levelling device and was considered a gesture of group membership, yet the refusal of drink could be perceived as offensive and 'brings the suspicion that some offence has been given' (Bales, 1962: 172). McCarthy also observed the symbolic importance of reciprocity among the drinking in-group: 'The man that does not stand a drink is considered a mean man; the man that gives drink freely in his own house and pays for it for others in public-houses is a "decent fellow"' (1911: 396).

The tradition of occupational drinking groups in Ireland in all probability contributed to the formation of the bachelor group. In his discussion of occupational drinking among the fishermen of a small village, Adrian Peace (1992) notes, 'heavy alcohol consumption is considered nothing untoward. For most men, any weekend involves a substantial amount of drinking within several of its bars: a proportion of these drink regularly throughout the week ... drinking is for the most part a male preserve' (1992: 167). Similarly, Curtin and Ryan (1989) found the patrons in working class pubs in Ennis town carrying out similar practices. They refer to the developmental process of drinking and pub initiation as a sort of cultural 'apprenticeship':

> Outside the factory, 'the lads' gravitate towards a social orbit which will satisfy the need to confirm their worth and reinforce their class identity. The world of work, and their particular shared experience of work in the factory, has forged the parameters of a lifestyle which must find expression in the social arena. The hub of this social arena is the 'local' pub. Here, learnt notions about their working class masculinity and culture as defined by the work they do, find a forum and can be shared.... [F]ull absorption into the adult working class world would not come until they begin their working lives. Only then would the set of cultural skills (chauvinism, toughness and machoism) they had developed through adolescence, find full expression. Now that this final step in their cultural apprenticeship is complete, the 'lads' take full advantage of their 'adulthood'. (Curtin and Ryan, 1989: 139 – 140)

Within work groups, habitual drinking practices were encouraged to promote conformity as a sign of solidarity, establish group identity that differed from kinship and community ties and to become a member of an in-group. Those who

refused to participate in social outings with fellow workers were criticised and ultimately rejected by the group.

Frequent and reciprocal drinking activities operated as levellers to equalise those who were not socially equal (i.e. the landless, the unmarried, younger siblings) and acted to redefine identities of masculinity within the framework of the emerging devotional Catholic ideology. Perhaps most importantly, it defined a geography that was distinctly 'Irish' and 'male' in a colonial context that projected these identities as inferior. It was the all-male bonding groups who, through the use of alcohol, asserted their identities and sought out sites of refuge from the domestic/workplace. The relationship of place, identity and consumption contributed to the cultural production of the pub as a site of masculine identity, which will be discussed extensively in the following chapter.

Conclusion

Historically, alcohol consumption was socially utilised in rural Ireland as a means to facilitate both bonding and bridging social networks and to maintain community ties. Yet the failure to integrate drinking controls into family and religious life significantly influenced the cultural discourse of alcohol use throughout Ireland. As a result, ambiguous and overly permissive attitudes developed towards convivial drinking practices which became prevalent in 19th century Ireland, which led to the extensive use of alcohol among children and adults alike with a small proportion of the population practising an ideologically unique form of abstinence. Attitudes of permissiveness were developed to include a tolerance towards displays of social drunkenness and drinking pathologies. Author Tom Harrison concludes that the 'prevalence of drunkenness depends as much on culture as on social organisation' (1994: 393). However, in a culture where social institutions failed to regulate alcohol intake, 'drunkenness [was] tolerated to a far greater extent in Ireland than elsewhere' (Pritchard, 1985: 2).

The institutionalisation of male drinking groups occurred in response to a culmination of historical events and social change in 19th century Irish peasant culture. An extensive history of colonisation led to the fragmentation of Irish communities and resulted in a loss of place and communal identity. Severe famine and depopulation through death and emigration further established a sense of alienation in relation to collective identity and place. The resulting changes in family structure and land distribution intensified the dynamics of power and the attainment of status by individuals throughout rural communities and towns.

The colonial government gradually relinquished social control to the authority of the Irish Catholic Church, who insisted on complete authority over the body and its relationship to space and place. To facilitate control over individuals and communities, Irish religious and political authorities conceptually differentiated and enforced polemically masculine or feminine territories. In the context of an unindustrialised, rural peasant society, the domestic sphere was assigned to women who were strictly relegated to this role. Changing gender roles and emerging conceptualisations of those roles within space and place provided a framework in which male drinking groups could occur. All-male drinking parties functioned to provide members with a psychologically and emotionally secure reference group that was free of the monitoring of the Church, the family and the hegemonic constraints of the colonial authority. Through the 'ethic of hard drinking' these all-male gatherings encouraged solidarity through the formation of a group identity and peer bonding in a continuously fragmenting society. Although the everyday use of alcohol among this cultural group was overly-exaggerated and its use within rural Ireland was not especially unique, a culmination of events led to the institutionalisation of the drinking house and the subsequent activities associated with its use. It was under these circumstances that a separate place, the pub, was appropriated as a site of reference for all-male groups. Alcohol consumption, used to facilitate the production and maintenance of social capital in rural Irish culture, became a principal catalyst for production of the pub as a third place. Crucially

linked to social networking and modes of identity construction, the pub began to develop as *the* quintessential third place in Ireland.

Chapter Four: *The Social Construction of the Pub as a Third Place*

Introduction

Place obtains its meaning through the interaction of social discourse, the experience of landscape, and the projection of the geography on the individual. A sense of place occurs when agency connects and relates to a specific geography and provides individuals and social groups with a familiar and meaningful base from which to observe and position themselves in the world. The relationships that develop between individuals and places provide common ground to bond, connect, and form beneficial social relationships in which various forms of social capital can proliferate. It is the interactive relationship between place, agency, and discourse that informed the development of the pub as a third place.

As discussed in chapter three, the reconfiguration of space and place in colonial and post-colonial Ireland and the redefinition of collective identity resulted in a complex set of gender relations. As gender roles became increasingly dichotomous the enforcement of gendered spaces intensified. Resultantly, power structures relegated women to the domestic and the rural landscape not only came to conceptualise hegemonic masculinity, but also became a site for masculine identities to form and patriarchy to be maintained. Inglis notes that 'the fields and the pubs became the spaces in which males exercised their power' (1998: 171).

As an exclusively rural male geography the public house provided a unique location for the formation of the archetypal Irish [male] identity. In this context, I will discuss the phenomenon of the Irish pub in relation to Oldenburg's premise of gender segregation and the construction of the third place. Using this debate to explore the connection between the rural idyll, national identity and gendered space, I will describe the emergence of the pub as the Irish third place which, I will argue, came about through the relationship of geography, discourse, power and its relationship to the signifiers of identity:

> place is also more than an 'object'. Concrete, everyday practices give rise to a cultural mediation or 'structure of feeling' ... or 'felt sense of quality of life at a particular place and time'. This sense of place reinforces the social-spatial definition of place from *inside*, so to speak. The identification with place that *can* follow contributes yet another aspect to the meaning of place: one place or 'territory' in its differentiation from other places can become an 'object' of identity for a 'subject'. (Agnew 1993: 263) (emphasis in original)

In this chapter I will use the Irish pub to explore the ways in which a post-colonial independence produced radical changes in the differentiation of space and in the distribution and use of power within those spaces. I will explore how the emerging socio-political discourse encouraged nationalism among the Republic's new citizens and led to the creation of new signifiers of Irish identity. It was within this historical context that Irish drinking identities were propagated and exported, where they evolved and were ultimately imported back into Ireland to be reclaimed as identities of power.

In conclusion, I will argue that the pub functioned as the primary Irish third place, which provided a forum for identity construction during a period of national transformation. This unique Irish third place became a site that integrated aspects of nationalism, gender, alcohol use, social capital and place into day-to-day life that has continued into contemporary Ireland.

Reconstructing Irish identity through place

Following the independence of Ireland and the formation of the Irish Free State and then the Republic, socio-political and cultural discourse focused on the re-definition of an Irish identity that rejected colonial concepts of power and knowledge. As the body politic sought to create a new type of citizen, the inextricable link between power, space and place was re-conceptualised to fit within newly found identities. As a result, geography took on new meanings and new powers emerged from the landscape:

> landscape doesn't just symbolise power relations but actually makes them work. In other words, landscape doesn't just show us what power relations

> exist, it actually *perpetuates* those relations; landscape is an instrument of cultural power.... In this sense, it is a form of communication: communicating aspects of identity and the power of some identities over others. (Mitchell, 1997: 124)

Consequently, the 'rural idyll', already powerful prior to independence, emerged as a national signifier and a new ideological relation to rural space was formed. Similar to other cultures with strong national identities, the rural idyll had been present in the Irish cultural imagination for some time, although the creation of the Republic propelled the rural landscape into becoming *the* metaphorical geography for identities of Irishness.

As a post-colonial nation, Ireland struggled to reconstruct its cultural framework and reclaim a sense of place through the creation of an independent national identity. Smith argues that:

> of all the senses of belonging and group identity that help to constitute the Self, national identity is perhaps the most fundamental and inclusive ... other types of collective identity – class, gender, race, religion – may overlap or combine with national identity but they rarely succeed in undermining its hold. (1993: 127)

A socio-political focus on the creation of new definitions of Irishness led to a conceptual shift from a colonial designation as the 'other' to the development of a framework of identity that is associated with mythologised representations of an imagined rural landscape and rural lore. Brace (2003) notes that:

> rural landscapes, as cultural objects, are manifested in and through discourses. Such discourses come to tell a story about the rural, which is also a story about society – they are allegorical. The way the rural landscape comes across in these stories is inevitably selective.... Indeed, one can describe the rural landscape as having been transformed into a 'social representation.' ... Such representations comprise both concrete images and attached or associated concepts and emotions. (144)

Daniels recognises the role of landscapes in the formation of national identities which he argues are 'co-ordinated, often largely defined ... by landscapes.... Landscapes, whether focusing on single monuments or framing stretches of

scenery, provide visible shape; they picture the nation' (1993: 5). This conceptual association of national identity to an imagined rural geography greatly contributed to the social construction of the Irish rural idyll. The rural idyll was manifested through the cultural visual imagination using representations of an idyllic Irish place, life and Irish character.[18]

The identification of the rural idyll as symbolic of national identity resulted in a homogenisation of representations of Irishness.[19] Brace suggests the:

> appearance of a homogenous, unquestioned and unquestionable national identity is achieved by a process of inclusion of ideas or images that give credence to a particular version of national identity and omission of ideas or images that challenge it. (2003: 128)

As a result, territorial distinctiveness was increasingly erased from signifiers of Irish identity. Individuals or groups who did not meet the criteria of the rural idyll were consigned as 'rural others' and were relegated to what human geographer Chris Philo refers to as 'neglected rural geographies' (1992). Those who deviated from the rural idyll had limited entry into in-groups, were excluded from representations of Irishness, and were non-participants in the discourse of identity. Instead, neglected identities were concealed within the rural landscape 'where there is a rich tapestry of myth and symbolism capable of hiding or excluding othered identities' (Cloke, 1997: 369).

The othering of individuals or groups demonstrates the relationship between landscape, power and discourse and reveals 'how some social groups come to have power over others' (Mitchell, 1997: 124). Mitchell argues that geography is not

[18] The rural idyll continues to thrive in Ireland and elsewhere. People visit and move to the rural locations because they are perceived as cleaner, quieter, less congested, safer, calming and relaxing and as being a superior location to raise children, live and participate in community life – all qualities that are perceived by many to be 'better' than living elsewhere. Imagery representing the Irish rural idyll can be found in visual art, film and television, literature, tourist products, advertisements (for example Guinness or Bulmers cider) and in media representations.

[19] National identification with an imagined rural landscape and the creation of a rural idyll is certainly not unique. See Halfacree (1997) for a description of the rural idyll and the English countryside. Also, see Short (2003) for an analysis on the role of the rural geography in the development of British nationalism.

only representative of social power dynamics, but also is an agent of its proliferation. The representational use of a mythologised landscape led to the creation of a rural lore that provided a '"social representation" and an organisation mental [construct] which guides ... towards what is "visible" and must be responded to, relates appearance and reality, and even defines reality itself' (Halfacree, 1997: 144). Thus, a sense of place occurred through the appropriation of geography and was intrinsically linked to the generation of power, knowledge and the social constructions of identities.

Gendered landscapes/gendered places

The development of the rural idyll in Ireland was analogous to the re-identification of the rural landscape and emerging nationalist discourse. The construction of a fixed Irish identity was achieved in part through this redefinition of place, space and power structures located within the newly defined and exclusively rural geography. The qualities necessary to survive in the difficult habitat of the West represented virtues that the newly independent nation sought to affiliate itself – hardy, strong, and masculine. Literally and metaphorically, the harsh coastal lands of the West of Ireland was an ideal landscape in which to test the endurance of its inhabitants and provide 'rites of passage' that were essential to the attainment of masculine virtues (also observed in the American West and the Australian Bush, among others). Philips (1995) asserts that the 'metaphorical femininity of the landscape presents an other against which the hero can define his masculine self' (601).[20] The feminisation of the Irish landscape, and in a sense the eroticisation of the geography itself can be found throughout Irish literature and cultural imagery. Through the process of 'Gaelicisation' and the promotion of the rural idyll, exaggeratedly traditional gender roles and family structure attained iconic status

[20] This imagery was promoted through popular cultural products, for example, the well-known and controversial docu-drama 'Man of Aran' by Irish-American Robert Flaherty (1934). A brief description of the use of film in the myth-making of rural Irish identity is briefly described in Browne's 'Man of Aran' profile (1994).

and developed as identities of Irishness and symbols of nationalism. Walter notes that:

> All nations represent themselves as families, interconnected and united, but the trope is particularly resonant in Ireland. Ironically it is headed by the figure of 'Mother Ireland', although power clearly resides with father-farmers. (2001: 19)

Peter Brooks, in *Body Work: objects of desire in modern narrative*, refers to this idealisation of the family as the 'Republic of Virtue', which 'did not conceive of women occupying public space; female virtue was domestic, private, unassuming' (1993: 59). As previously discussed, within the context of Irish Catholic hegemony, representations of women were limited to 'traditional' roles that maintained the position of women within the domestic sphere. Little and Austin (1996) note that 'the rural idyll has traditionally included very conventional images and expectations of women's place in rural society; at the heart of the family, the centre of the community' (106).

Within the context of a gendered landscape and a new power structure, the state established policies that reflected this attempt to establish a national identity using a patriarchal framework. Although Irish women had very much participated in Ireland's emancipation from Great Britain, once independence was achieved women became subjugated under the post-colonial attempt to redefine Irish masculinity and as a result, gender dynamics throughout Irish society became further masculinised. DeValera promoted a new post-colonial nationalistic identity through the institutionalisation of a romanticised Gaelic past and the mythologisation of the Irish male peasant (referred to as 'Gaelicisation' or 'Celticism') into various social structures including schools, churches, families and communities. The differentiation of space and the complexities of the social relations of this period awarded meaning to those places where men congregated. The historical use of alcohol in constructions of identity and the changing geographies of colonial and post-colonial Ireland contributed to the continuing emergence of the pub as a third place.

The emergence of the Irish pub as a genuine third place

The social construction of place is an ongoing process that parallels the formation of discourse, power structures and the identification of meaningful space. This interaction of discourse, power and space convene for the manufacturing of place, and can be described as 'always involv[ing] an appropriation and transformation of space and nature that is inseparable from the reproduction and transformation of society in time and space' (Pred in Walker and Bellamy: 262 – 263). Historically, geography becomes conceptually differentiated as a sense of place evolves within a cultural consciousness. This normally occurs through the separation of the domestic and workspace as modernity progresses:

> Before industrialisation, the first and second places were one. Industrialisation separated the place of work from the place of residence, removing productive work from the home and making it remote in distance, morality, and spirit from family life. (Oldenburg, 1999: 16)

Ireland, however, followed a unique pattern of modernisation in the 19th and 20th centuries[21], with sporadic and interrupted progressions of industrialisation while remaining a primarily agriculturally based society. For a large portion of rural Ireland, work was located in and around the home, which existed as the primary reference point for a sense of place. Nonetheless, a number of hegemonic shifts insisted on the disciplining of space that inadvertently led to an identification and categorisation of place. Led primarily by Irish Catholic ideology, a conceptual shift occurred that altered the perception of the self and the self in relation to space, thus defining the boundaries of new places:

> It was a transformation of lifestyle, customs and manners. It was a transformation of the body in terms of the mechanisms by which it was controlled. It involved changes in the space in which the body operated.... It involved a transformation of space – from open fields to the confined spaces of school desks and from mass rocks and houses to ornate churches with pews. (Inglis, 1998: 137)

[21] There are many exceptions, such as the industrial developments that occurred in the urban centres of Belfast, Limerick, Waterford and Dublin. Industry was also was present in some rural communities, largely in the form of flax and linen factories, flourmills, tanneries, mines and quarries.

It was under these conditions and through increasing gender polarisation, as discussed in chapter two, that gendered spaces became rigidly defined. As a result, the domestic sphere was delegated exclusively to women and the Irish mother was assigned total control over the household, albeit within a restrictive patriarchal framework:

> it was the women of Ireland who transformed ... [houses] into homes. It was by making the space in which they lived a home rather than an unregulated, undefined, badly constructed living space that Irish mothers were able to establish and maintain the practices associated with the new stem-family system.... It was the confinement of women to the house which led it to be turned into a home. It was from within the home that the practices central to the modernisation of Irish agriculture – postponed marriage, permanent celibacy, and emigration, were developed. (Inglis, 1998: 186 – 187)

Oldenburg suggests that it is the relegation of women to the mothering role in the domestic that contributed to the creation of the third place. His understanding of third place origins is founded in exclusive gender roles that strictly confine women to the domestic:

> Men's dominance of the third place tradition is not difficult to understand. The first and most obvious reason for it stems from the mothering role. Unlike men's third places, which are set apart not only from women but also from the entire family, gatherings of women have almost always included their children.... Being eternally 'on duty,' women have been far less inclined to drink alcoholic beverages, get rowdy, or stray far from the domestic setting and its responsibilities. (1999: 232)

With the home/work place established as gendered territory dominated by women, the institutionalisation of the bachelor group was formalised and the male appropriation of the Irish third place came about. The absence and othering of women in the rural idyll contributed to the formation of identities of power and the creation of gendered spaces.[22] The relationship between drinking, place and masculine identity inevitably led to the establishment of the Irish pub as a male territory:

[22] For a topical example of this concept, see Lucienne Roubin's (1977) 'Male Space and Female Space within the Provencial Community,' where she identifies gendered territories and spaces throughout a French village.

> Inasmuch as the home became the space in which women exercised control, the fields and the pub became the spaces in which males exercised their power. As much as there was, in the increasing rationalisation and differentiation of the spheres of Irish social life, a time and place for everything, there was a time and place for males in the pub. (Inglis: 170 – 171)

Women were relegated to the private domestic sphere while men dominated public and semi-public life. The Irish pub became an essential cultural artefact within the rural idyll and was designated as a signifier of national identity. As a gendered space, the pub provided an escape from feminine geographies while functioning as an identity-resolving forum in which to construct and exert masculine identities:

> in the male orientated bachelor society of the West, ... where women were more vulnerable to social condemnation, the male dominance of the pub became absolute and ... the pub had no place for women in it. (Pritchard, 1985: 14 – 16)

Drawing on the work of Arensburg and Kimball, Curtin and Ryan (1989) observed similar patterns in the Ennis pubs of the 1980s. In their research, they clearly outlined the division in gender dynamics and found men continued to dominate the pubs while women remained confined to the domestic sphere.

While Oldenburg suggests that the need for regular gender-exclusive spaces is relatively benign, others argue that the male domination of the pub is an expression of patriarchy and linked to the use of alcohol as an assertion of masculine identity. Gefou-Madianou (1992), in her analysis of gender and drinking, observed a link between the 'threat' of women to masculine identity and the desire for segregated spaces:

> Male drinking, in bars ... serves to constitute their identity as men, obscuring as it does their dependency on the female members of their households. In short, men find themselves in a position of insecurity *vis-à-vis* women, in a position of 'vulnerable dominance'. It is a position they seek to overcome and possibly escape from through all-male commensal relations which take place outside the home and which deny women entrance. (10)

Campbell and Philip's (1995) assessment of rural pubs in Australia has also indicated third places are the domains of masculine hegemonic practices:

> One of the characteristics of such sites is the high level of male-male interaction: when men gather in groups masculine hegemony finds its most powerful expression. Due to the atomised nature of the rural labour process, male groups are less likely to form around the workplace and there is greater emphasis on the gathering of rural men in public leisure venues, in particular pubs. (109)

Inglis (1998) asserts that pub-based displays of masculinity materialised as a result of Irish-Catholic hegemony.[23] Conversely, Hey argues that power relations formed in the pub reinforced patriarchal values, as it was men who had exclusive authority over Irish identity and the production and exchange of social and economic capital. Hey views the hyper-masculine environment of the pub as an extreme display of patriarchy:

> Men of all material positions can tap into the culture of misogyny and I contend that the pub is a prime site of its expression and circulation ... [the] very terms are ones of female exclusion and the consequent control of women: a banding together against our disruptive presence. (1986: 42)

Sociologist Ann Whitehead, in her observations of gender relations in a Herefordshire pub, also suggests that 'what happens to men and women in pubs is explicable in terms of patriarchal social relations' (1976: 175). Similarly, Driessan concludes that the exclusion of women from Spanish coffee-houses, like pubs, reasserts male subjugation of women. She notes that 'dominance over women is reinforced by these rites in coffee houses which exclude females' (1992: 8). Whitehead reports that 'men and women do not have equal access to this pub as a source of leisure and pleasure: men are dominant and women are socially disenfranchised' (1976: 199). Consequently, women's access to networks of social capital in the community is extremely limited. Halfacree asserts that:

> There are ... consequences for ... women being placed so firmly within the home and in association with domestic work.... For example, there is often a clear distinction made between the 'private' sphere of the home and the

[23] Inglis argues that pub culture acted as a form of disciplinary control: 'As much as the Church and school served to develop a rigid system of sexual morality, the pub, in later life, served to maintain this morality, albeit in a more convivial but nevertheless highly ritualistic and disciplined manner. The pub became the place where men displaced their sexual frustration through a repetitive compulsive pattern of drinking. If the school was the penitential house which characterised the transformation of Irish society in the first half of the nineteenth century, the pub became a type of perpetual secondary school for males' (2003: 170).

'public' sphere of the village. *Women may feel especially out of place in public places such as the pub*. (1997: 149) (emphasis added)

It was not coincidental that the increase in women's social and political powers in Ireland brought with it access into the pub. As Burnett notes, the increase in women's participation in the pub was 'one of the unexpected results of the emancipation of women' (1999: 130).

The differentiation of place and the origins of the third place

Until 19th century, the geographies of the pub, tavern and shebeen were only marginally different from that of the home/work space. Yet as space became identified, categorised and disciplined, the pub began to conceptually differentiate as a new and distinct place that was unaffiliated with either the workplace or the private household. Important contributory factors led to this development, including the social prominence of the consumption of alcohol on these sites; the failure to develop other sites of leisure; the physical and social conditions of the home/work place; the necessity for a psychological and emotional refuge; and perhaps most importantly, the need for a 'home away from home' for a sub-group that was alienated within the domestic. It was through this use of space that the characteristics of a third place began to form: a differentiation from domestic and work space; a welcome, comfortable and neutral setting for in-groups that was devoid of formalities; a location to generate social capital (Curtin and Ryan, 1989); social and intellectual stimulation; access to social networking within a geographically and socially isolated rural setting; and a geography in which to explore and establish individual and collective masculine identities (Campbell and Philips, 1995; Peace, 1992; Curtin and Ryan, 1989).

Nineteenth century living conditions also, in all probability, considerably contributed to the development of an alternative site of leisure. The family home was not only cramped but was also likely to be cold, damp and draughty. Even during the course of this research I sadly observed several men stealing from fuel

buckets in the pub. In one pub in particular, an older man would arrive on colder evenings and fill his coat pockets with lumps of coal. A number of informants presented living conditions as an explanation for the emergence of the pub in Ireland:

> Well, the little cottages that people lived in were very small, very cramped with very large families. Sometimes eight or ten kids.... You can see why the pub had some appeal to that. (B60M)

> I suppose the size of the homes and the size of the families in them [led them to] always be in the pub. If it was cold, raining, that's where they would go. (J26F)

Like the informants, Cassidy notes that '[i]t has been repeatedly noted that the Irish enjoyed a social life outside of the family home due to the smallness of their living quarters and the tendency towards a large family' (1997: *xii*). Curtin and Ryan come to similar conclusions by noting the formation of leisure outside of the family home arose because of the 'spatial proximity which characterised life in the laneway and back street hovels and tenements made domestic privacy virtually impossible and consequently, leisure activities centred on the neighbourhood groups' (1989: 134).

As individuals sought out an everyday refuge that was accessible, welcoming, comfortable, and free of formalities, yet separate from the home/work place, pub culture emerged gradually in colonial Ireland. The pub provided a casual site of informality and what are referred to as a 'landscape of leisure' which are sites that are 'treated as separate, self-contained spaces within which one could escape from the rigours of daily life' (Warren, 1993: 173). As the pub became the primary site of leisure, entertainment, recreation, amusement and fun became fundamental to the experience of the geography. This feature of pub culture has continued into contemporary uses of the Irish pub. In his observation of pub based drinking sessions, Peace notes that 'a good deal of physical horseplay accompanies any serious drinking bout' during the all-male drinking sessions (1992: 173). Indeed, in

the many hours spent observing pub behaviours, leisure, fun, play, laughter and joking are obvious features of pub attendance.

The provision of a relaxing and low-stress environment also continues to be a quality that draws the individual into modern pub. Oldenburg argues that '[w]here neutral ground is available it makes it possible for more informal, even intimate, relations among people than could be entertained in the home' (1999: 23) and notes, '[p]eople go to pubs because they want to feel welcome' (1999: 125). Originally, the pub offered the male patronage the opportunity for leisure through the provision of neutral sites outside of the household where men could congregate and form intimate relationships with non-relatives or extended kin. Barrett illustrates this aspect of third places when he states that the 'shebeen was clearly a refuge from a whole variety of conflicts produced by the Irish family structure and land tenure system' (1977: 23 – 24). The bachelor group and the pub allowed men to avoid the gaze of moral authority while continuing to adhere to socially established norms. Inglis asserts that men relied on the pub to '[escape] from the moral supervision of priests and women' (1998: 171).

While the public house was a site of leisure and provided an everyday escape from societal pressures, it also developed as a forum for intellectual stimulation. Rural pubs offered the exclusively male clientele access to social, political and intellectual dialogue by providing a location for discussion and debate. Within the confines of the pub, hierarchies could be levelled and reordered so that individuals could be temporarily free from prescribed social roles, expanding opportunities to participate in discourse. Again, this feature of the developing pub continues to resonate today with Irish politicians regularly using the local for 'clinics' (meetings with the constituency). Observations also revealed that politicking very much takes place in pubs around election times and that political organisations often use the public house as a site for meetings, presentations and discussions. One informant, for example, sold Republican newspapers and organised political meetings in his local pub.

The shebeen, an illegal drinking house, is described by O'Connor as a 'meeting place for all the loose and disorderly characters in the neighbourhood, where, half-intoxicated, they discussed politics' (1978: 48). Participation in these politicised sites actively challenged colonial hegemonic authority and encouraged the 'peasant's developing nationalist consciousness' (Barrett, 1977: 19). Reilly similarly noted: 'the tavern has been important in both political and social terms.... In Ireland, the tavern was frequently the focal point for nationalist (anti-British) secret societies' (1976: 571). Pritchard attributes the development of modern social and political discourse to this informal site:

> This is why the pub is of such importance in the social life of the country, because, as the moral and political issues of the day would be debated and a consensus of opinion arrived at ... the pint has been as powerful catalyst as the pulpit, and the pub is as worthy of serious discussion and consideration as the church. (1985: 3)

Similarly, Oldenburg describes the cafés of East Germany as spaces 'in which people might linger for more than one hour discussing the horrors of the day, [and] are potentially the breeding grounds of dissent' and notes that in 'totalitarian societies, the leadership is keenly aware of the political potential of informal gathering places and actively discourages them' (1999: 66 - 67).

The shebeen[24] also provided a site of everyday resistance; by meeting in an illegal establishment and drinking illegal, untaxed spirits, the rural Irish subverted the imperial authority and economy. The production and selling of illegal spirits undermined the tax system and generated supplementary incomes. Public drunkenness was also, in many cases, a form of resistance, as it caused social disruption and dysfunction that interfered with the efficiency of the colonial authority:

[24] Illegal shebeens continue to operate in Ireland. A housing estate shed in Co. Limerick was recently outfitted into a make-shift shebeen called *Ma Kelly's* (*The Irish Times*, 19 April 2008). The popular shebeen continued to serve alcohol despite a number of high profile Gardai raids. Shebeens in other parts of the world, including South Africa, have also been known as sites of political and social subversion.

> In an historical sense, self-preservation for Ireland meant conforming to the tyrannical rule of England without political autonomy, without land, without the free practice of religion, without self-respect. Self-destruction, on the other hand, was rebellion. (Stivers, 2002: 104)

The Irish third place

As other European societies developed alternative locations as sites of social capital – cafés, libraries, parks, coffee or tea houses, public spaces, etc. – the Irish increasingly spent more time in the pub. Attempts to form other types of social centres and 'sites of amusement' were not as successful in Ireland, with the exception of coffee and tea cafeterias in urban centres (i.e. Bewley's, Café Kylemore), and the public house evolved as the primary site of leisure throughout the countryside. Stivers explains that:

> The old patterns of occupational drinking proved incongruent with the increasing rationalisation of economic life. Modern industrial techniques demanded a well-disciplined and regular work force.... The contrast with Ireland is illuminating. During the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, Ireland remained largely unindustrialised. In addition widespread poverty precluded the proliferation of amusement centres to compete with pubs. (2002: 47 – 48)

The pub enabled a variety of social relationships to develop as it provided an ideal setting for the reciprocal practice of rounds; the formation of social solidarity through group membership and loyalty and a collective sense of place through membership to a locality. The pub presented a geography where group identity and a collective sense of place could be formed and offered a location where both bonding and bridging relationships could develop. The bridging networks formed centred around the pub provided opportunities to establish contacts, form economic relationships and negotiate and settle deals. Social networking and alcohol consumption facilitated the economic functioning of the pub as well. The customary practice of deal making and drinking in the pub helped to balance power between un-equals: between buyer and seller, farmer and businessman and father and potential father-in-law.

While maintaining a low profile on the social landscape, the pub developed as the primary site of leisure and recreation for male-bonding networks. The public house achieved its position by providing a welcoming and neutral locality that acted as a refuge from the tensions and formalities of the community, while continuing to remain a part of the community. Typically overlooked as a social institution, the pub was able to meet a number of emotional, social and psychological needs. The ability of the individual to habitually escape physically and socially arduous domestic and work spaces for a period of time and the opportunity to engage in a number of significant social networks, have made the pub an ideal location for a number of social networks to form. The need to achieve equality through levelling in an inflexible social hierarchy, the need for discourse and stimulation, the need to participate in bonding networks, the possibility to engage bridging networks, and crucially, the availability of alcohol promoted the pub as an ideal location for young men to construct and publicly perform identities of masculinity and assert social status. These characteristics have contributed to the rise of the pub as the quintessential third place and continue into contemporary Ireland.

Changes in pub space & the 'feminisation' of the pub

Irish society, as in other Western cultures, began to experience gradual gender changes by the mid-20th century. As women slowly entered into traditionally male professions and men experienced greater participation in domestic life, leisure time increased for both sexes and social life became more inclusive. As a result women began to re-enter the pub[25] in the early to mid-1900s, albeit at a much slower pace in rural areas and in the North West in particular. Molloy notes that even in the 1970s 'it was still common enough to see women and children sitting outside a pub while husbands and fathers were drinking inside' (2002: 80). In fact, women were

[25] The exclusion of women from the pub was not always the case as women drank publicly through the 17th century and well into the 1800s. Pritchard claims that in 'pre-famine times records indicate that women mingled freely with men in Irish drinking places.... However in the late nineteenth century a strongly moralistic tendency in the Catholic Church imposed new standards of strict behaviour on the Irish people and the idea of women and men drinking together came to be considered improper and even indecent' (1985: 16).

not legally guaranteed entry into the pub until the Equal Status Act of 2000. Initially, the enclosed area of the snug was an acceptable location for women to occupy. Snugs were most often found in pubs in cities, towns and villages, and were by no means in all or in even most public houses (see *figure 13*). Snugs were located near an entrance so women would not walk through or linger in the bar. Typically, the barman would enter into the snug or use a side window so that the occupants could place an order, again preventing women from approaching the bar and possibly mixing with the all-male clientele.

Fig.12 Grocery shop/pub

Fig.13 Snug.

More often women socialised and consumed alcohol at grocery counters (see *figure 13*), which were common in rural areas. In the *Limerick Rural Survey* McNabb (1964) reports that 'a respectable woman would never set foot inside one of these places unless there is a grocery shop attached. She certainly never drinks in the local bar' (233). As the groceries died out in the mid-1950s and 1960s and more women began to use pub space, the pub was partitioned into bar and lounge. The bar retained its masculine space and continued to exclude women, while the lounge

was 'feminised' for the use of women and their partners and later families. Initially the lounge was maintained to a higher standard than the bar and was decorated to correspond to social conceptualisations of femininity. Comfort and cleanliness were of greater significance in the lounge area and a domestic atmosphere was evoked. Molloy identifies various physical changes in the Irish pub and notes the shift in place during this time:

> A new trend has set in, the pubs of today are more often light and spacious with wide leather settees, carpets under foot, taped music playing or a television set interrupting the conversation; places where women are expected and catered for and where there is no snug. Probably, the pub itself is all lounge and has no simple straightforward bar, where waiters circulated carrying trays laden with a bewildering variety of drinks. (2002: 81)

Although the pub continued to be dominated by males and male behaviour, Tom Harrison argued 'the woman's place in the pub is that part of it which is home from home, a better home from an ordinary worker's home' (1943: 106). Thus, began the development of the pub as a third place for contemporary Irish women. The contemporary pub as a gendered place will be discussed in further chapters.

Conclusion

The Irish rural idyll includes perceived notions of public, semi-public, private, interior and exterior spaces that existed within the rural geography. Particularly, the semi-public interior space of the pub developed as an essential aspect of the Irish rural idyll and so became an important element in the construction of modern Irish identity. Significant to the construction of the post-colonial Irish self were the activities and behaviours typically involved in pub attendance, which continue to be observed in contemporary Ireland as instruments to inform and construct identities of Irishness. Urban pubs, while not the focus of this project, shared a number of similarities with the emergence of the rural pub the development of Irish pub culture. The exclusion of women and the use of pub places to construct and reinforce identities of masculinity have been observed in urban pubs in Ireland, for example (Kearns, 1997; Curtin and Ryan, 1989).

As I have suggested, all-male drinking groups provided an opportunity to symbolically explore and establish individual and collective masculine identities. Based within the public house, the bachelor group created its own form of discipline through a hyper-masculinised hegemony. This collective identity generated the development of bonding and bridging networks and was inextricably linked to a sense of place. These groups were linked to public houses and membership into the group required frequent attendance to the pub. As the bachelor group claimed the pub as their own, it was transformed into a representational geography in which identities could be constructed and displayed. Conclusively, the sum of everyday experiences based around the pub – drinking and the culturally related experiences of consumption, the relationship of pub space to the sense of place in community, the use of pub space as a primary site for the production and utilisation of social capital and finally, identifying and using pub space as a signifier of the self – provided a basis for the development of the pub as the quintessential third place in Ireland.

Chapter Five: *The Pub as an Identity-Resolving Forum*

> Being here [in the pub] makes me feel normal again. I can take it easy, have a pint, you know, and all these people here, ... they know me. (J64M)

Introduction

People go to the pub for a variety of reasons. As outlined in the previous chapters I described a number of the social functions the pub provides in the role of third place. The formative processes of the pub and its role in the identity construction of its inhabitants, as aptly illustrated by the informant in the statement above, is a major aspect of the relationship that forms between people and pub places.

The everyday practices found throughout pub culture act as solidarity promoting rituals among the individuals of a community and, as Bell (1998) argues, act to emotionally link the pub patrons to the space of the pub. This connection, formalised through the ritualisation of pub attendance, provides the surrounding landscape with meaning, and promotes a sense of belonging with regards to time, history, space and place within the context of the community – all of which contribute to the maintenance and preservation of the pub as a genuine third place. In this role the pub has developed as a venue for the 'process by which social and subjective identities are formed' (Bell, 1998: 1) and has become what Robbins, in his exploration of the cultural uses of alcohol, refers to as an 'identity-resolving forum.' Identity resolving forums are:

> social gatherings which exhibit the following characteristics. First, they are times in the flow of community activities which are set aside for the permitting of behaviours that are otherwise disallowed. Second, they have inherent in them statements or actions which demarcate ambiguities, inconsistencies, or conflicts in interpersonal relations, in this sense resembling what Victor Turner refers to as 'social drama'. Third, *during such gatherings persons are permitted and encouraged to adopt poses intended to demonstrate that they do indeed possess the attributes of the identity they claim....* In sum, *such gatherings or interactions involve the enactment of behavioural strategies to permit persons to maintain, attain, or protect desired identities or social position.* (2000: 160) (emphasis added)

Chapter five will examine the contemporary pub as an identity-resolving forum in which the formative activities and behaviours that contribute to the construction of the Irish self are explored, constructed and displayed. Pub activities include the expression of power dynamics, role performances, drinking practices and the integration of pub culture into the everyday. Individuals and groups, for example, participate in the production of social capital through the act of habitual drinking within a claimed space. These collective practices of the everyday evoke a sense of permanence, authenticity and ownership based in and around the pub and act as solidarity promoting rituals among the individuals of a community. These factors contribute to the development, maintenance and preservation of the pub as a third place act to emotionally link the pub patrons to the space of the pub through a shared sense of place. In this chapter I will describe how the pub functions in several ways that are self-perpetuating: how it has developed as a *primary locale* within the rural community[37]; how it is *representational*; and the ways in which the pub is *experienced* to the extent that it generates a distinct culture of its own that is part of the everyday. These key themes were aptly noted by a number of informants:

> [The pub is] a living, breathing being and it's an integral part of an awful lot of people's lives. I would say its part of being Irish because Irish pubs seem to spring up where ever you go. (M29F)

> It's part of who we are, it's an Irish thing. It's hard to describe really, but other people see it too because they come here in their droves to be a part of it and then you have your Irish pubs being built all over the place. (P34M)

In their statements, these participants demonstrated the degree to which place is linked to people and people construct place. Furthermore, they express the extent to which pub places are embedded in the cultural identities of many Irish people. The following chapter will describe a number of ways in which pubs act as

[37] I explored the basis for this development in chapter three: because it was exclusive to men in a social structure that placed women firmly in the domestic sphere which alienated men from the space of the home; because the pub provided its patrons with an opportunity to explore, develop and define significant aspects of their individual, communal, and national identities; and most importantly, because the pub as a social institution evolved, through these developments, as a third place.

'habitats of meaning' (Hannerz, 1996) and function as 'identity-resolving forum[s]' (Robbins, 2002).

Pub-based in-groups

Using Oldenburg's concept of the third place, the informal activities and behaviours that occur within the semi-public space of the pub help to maintain its status as a third place and perpetuate pub culture. Habitual practices draw individuals into the collective and evoke a sense of meaning, belonging and ownership over the place of the pub within the context of the surrounding cultural geography. Through the collective relationship, in-groups benefit the individual by providing access to bonding relationships and contribute to the formation and maintenance of social capital. Pub in-groups provide active connections through which social capital flows within the sub-culture of the public house, out into the immediate community and extending forth into the wider Irish society. Pub in-groups commonly overlap, widening the pool of potential links, networks and social opportunities to a larger number of individuals. Oldenburg maintains that the role of the third place is in providing a setting for the development of social solidarity through its mixing effect:

> Third places are forms of affiliation, and friends there come in 'sets'. Among those who have given allegiance to a third place, the regulars usually happen to be friends. Exceptions are few, for the company encourages harmony among all who gather in the name of sociability; further, the sources of human division are 'left outside' ... membership requirements are exceedingly modest.... Third places thus counter the inbreeding of sociability along social class and occupational lines, which the family and workplace encourages. (1999: 63 – 64)

In-groups often include the presence of key regulars who act as community secretaries - connecting individuals, directing inquiries to appropriate contacts and providing connections to a larger network of relationships. It is these core figures who best facilitate bridging networks in pub culture and in other areas of community social life. In the pubs I encountered a number of people who act as connectors. Typically, these individuals were pub regulars who were extremely

sociable, inviting and involved in a variety of large networks throughout the locale. They were excellent sources of community information and are skilled at linking a variety of individuals together who, in their opinion, would benefit from a relationship.

Acting as a locus for the community and a setting for in-groups, the everyday routine of pub attendance promotes solidarity through repetition and regularity that acts to emotionally tie members of the in-group and bind them to place. This in turn promotes the development of personal and social identities as one becomes identified as a 'regular' at the 'local'. Pubs provide 'habitués with regular identities and full-time memberships as they become core participants within an interpersonal environment' (Katovich and Reese, 1987: 310). Regulars noted that their pub was 'like home,' 'a second home,' 'where I can be comfortable,' or 'where my friends are.'

However, pub space is more than just a venue for social relationships to form. Fiske argues that the pub 'is a building, but more importantly it is a category of place ... a social space, organised by a set of rules which specify who can be in it and what they can do' (1987: 5). The pub organises the lives of those who regularly attend it, establishes order, facilitates relationships and dictates routine. Regulars and pub staff develop a sort of informal relationship and once I began attending a number of pubs with some regularity, staff and regulars learned my name and greeted me when I entered. The bar staff presides over the opening and closing hours, the drinking up times and has the power to refuse service and regulate pub behaviour. This function can be linked to Foucault's concept of 'disciplinary space,' the purpose of which is to:

> eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation.... Its aim [is] to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It [is] a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. (1979: 143)

The pub organises social interaction through established opening and closing hours and the comings and goings of regulars and staff. Over the course of the day a pattern of activities emerges as groups of regulars temporarily inhabit spaces and arrange themselves in those designated areas that 'belong' to them. Self-professed 'regulars' view their pub place as an essential moment in their weekly or daily routines. One informant described his 'territory' at the bar during a particular time of day. He warned: 'God help the man who sits on my stool' (N54M). Other regulars expressed similar sentiment. Regulars who are missing from the space for any length of time are discussed at length by the remaining in-group. Upon their return these 'missing' regulars are greeted and a celebratory drinking session often ensues in which they are received with a slagging - passive-aggressive joking – shaming them for their absence. It is in these disciplinary spaces that the everyday rites and rituals of transcendence occur so that the formation of both individual and collective Irish identities may emerge within a controlled social geography. The disciplinary process of the pub accounts for the time and activities of its regulars through the active connections with the community and possibly explains why the few who abstain from drink or who participate minimally in drinking activities are viewed with apprehension and typically pressurised to drink.

The relationship that develops between individuals, in-groups and the place of the pub is easily maintained through its informality, familiarity and comfort. The contemporary pub continues to serve as an escape from day-to-day life yet is a part of the everyday. As a third place the pub acts as a 'home away from home' for many individuals, where friends and acquaintances can informally 'meet up' if simply for 'a quick pint' or to 'get out of the house.' It is where one, as a member of an in-group, can casually 'hang out.' The pub is a location where finding a familiar face is always a possibility and pub-goers often stress the importance of 'their' local when they feel the need for social contact. Finally, pub regulars find that the personal benefits that emerge from pub attendance make it a pleasurable, enjoyable and therefore easy aspect of the everyday in which to participate. As one informant noted, 'it feels good to belong to something and be a part of something.'

Fig.14 Sunday afternoon pint and paper.

The pub as a forum for communication

The pub, by design, is a forum for communication and dialogue and it is this aspect of pub use that continues to remain prominent in contemporary Irish culture. As a primary site for informal social interaction, the pub is a site of much discussion, chat, debate, argument, joking and laughter among groups of friends and acquaintances. Additionally, alcohol consumption acts as a social lubricant and often encourages a loquacious atmosphere as drinking progresses into the evening.

Fig.15 Pub chat.

As a third place, the pub casually promotes bonding and bridging relationships through the facilitation of communication between individuals and in-groups. Both men and women use the pub to socialise and mix with in-groups and the pub is often viewed as a 'safe place' or an 'outlet' to unload personal and private concerns to friends and acquaintances. For example, it is often commented that men in particular use alcohol in the pub as an opportunity to become emotional, expressive and transcend their everyday identities. During my immersion into pub culture, I often found that after a certain point in the evening I was at the receiving end of a drunken 'confessional', almost always from a man. In the role of researcher, it was known that I was interested in talking and hearing stories and this seemed to spur the confessor into action. These experiences typically followed a very predictable pattern: a story was told, regret was expressed and advice was solicited. Permission to communicate and to be emotionally expressive appears to emerge from an acceptable vulnerability that emerges from the combination of being in [the pub] place and drinking alcohol together.[38] In addition to emotional intimacy, physical contact often becomes more frequent and affectionate over the course of a drinking session and men in particular can be seen slapping each other on the back, resting their hands on each others shoulders or putting their arms around one another:

> It seems therefore that there is in some societies a culturally defined 'need' for all-male gatherings in which alcohol plays a central role. In these alcohol drinking gatherings men transcend or go beyond the confines and constraints of the everyday world. Their talk becomes sentimental, their bodies more expressive. They hug one another with greater freedom, laugh, cry, and dance in ways that are said to express their true sentiments, their true selves. (Gefou-Madianou, 1992: 13)

Groups of women frequently meet up in the pub for drinks at lunchtime or to have a 'girl's night out,' which, presumably, is a night away from the home, partner, children and a night where the focus of the evening is on the communication and bonding needs of women. A girl's night out is often used to support women during times of personal crisis and viewed by its participants as therapeutic. One

[38] Perhaps one of the most vivid descriptions of this state of being within an Irish pub is to be found in Roddy Doyle's *The Snapper* (1991).

informant described how she had organised an all-woman evening to rally around her friend who had recently ended a relationship:

> She ended it with her bloke so she needs a good girl's night out to cheer her up. We'll look after her and keep and eye on her, let her have a bit of a laugh and a good time … [then] we'll make sure she's home to bed. (T24F)

Fig.16 Girls night out.

Married or partnered men will also occasionally have a 'boy's night out' or a 'night out with the lads' but this usually indicates that this individual would not regularly spend time away from his family or partner. In fact, many informants reported to sometimes 'needing' a night of same-sex bonding in the pub. This sentiment was stressed mostly among individuals who were in long-term relationships and who had children.

Joking is very much a part of pub banter and Radcliffe-Brown (1940) notes how joking relationships in particular strengthen male relationships. These relationships are a unique form of male communication that meets both levelling and bonding needs and demonstrates how some third places can function as sites of social neutrality. Lyman describes the multi-factorial function of jokes in the way that joking defuses male aggression, works to facilitate fraternal bonding and how jokes are:

> a theatre of domination in everyday life, and the success or failure of a joke marks the boundary within which power and aggression may be used in a relationship. Nearly all jokes have an aggressive content, indeed shared

> aggression toward an outsider is one of the primary ways by which a group may overcome internal tension and asserts its solidarity. (1995: 87)

Although competitive, joking or 'slagging' indirectly prevents any one individual from dominating other members of the group and is a tool not only as a form of social control but is used to maintain individual equality. It is the joking relationship that temporarily restructures social hierarchies by permitting those of lessor status demonstrate wit, soothe tensions and to ultimately exert power. Lyman argues that '[r]ule-governed aggression is a conduct that is very useful to organisations, in that it mobilises aggressive energies but binds them to order by rules,' increasing the possibility of bonding and subtly redefining identities of power:

> The male sense of order is procedural rather than substantive because the male bond is formal (rule governed), rather than personal (based upon intimacy and commitment). Male groups in this sense are shame cultures, not guilt cultures, because the male bond is a group identity that subordinates the individual to the rules, and because social control is imposed through collective judgements about self-control, such as 'strength' and 'cool'. The sense of order within such male groups is based upon the belief that all members are equally dependent upon the rules and that no personal dependence is created within the group. (1995: 94)

In Irish pubs, male identity is frequently established and maintained through joking relationships with other males as power is asserted through the objectification and subjugation of women:

> gender is not only the primary content of men's jokes, but the emotional structures of the male bond is built upon a joking relationships that 'negotiates' the tension men feel about their relationship with each other, and with women. (Lyman, 1995: 87)

Similarly, Whitehead found that '[g]ender stereotyping is clearly at work, with most of the talk and banter being focused on wives, marriages or sexual relationships' (1976: 199). This type of relation demonstrates:

> how in a rural setting, the pub is used to reinforce the cult of masculinity, women are used to maintain solidarity and ambivalent rivalry between men: jokes [are] used to stereotype women as contemptible and as sex objects to be controlled, prestige [is] related to an ability to control one's wife, and that these invariably influence marital relations. (Brake, 1980: 150)

While women are regularly the subject of jokes, I also found that women often participate in the joking, banter and laughter. They were, however, much more likely to convey insult if jokes are directed at them. Some women aggressively returned the 'slagging' to the 'offender' and used acerbic commentary to protect or defend themselves or the other female members of their in-group from perceived verbal abuse. In the locals, some women were known for their cutting brutality towards men, and, as a result, were rarely ever the object of joking. Among younger pub attendees, this form of communication appeared to maintain gender segregation to some extent. Young women often used joking or slagging to block men from entering into their in-group. As well, joking and slagging between males and females could also be used for flirtation and men often admire a woman who is able to 'hold her own.'

Joking relationships and other forms of communication found in the pub reflect and reinforce social dynamics of gender and identity in contemporary Irish society. Joking provides a special kind of relationship which, Lyman explains, 'suspends the rules of everyday life in order to preserve them' (1995: 87). By providing a forum to indirectly express emotions and negotiate tensions in a controlled manner, group solidarity is 'reconstitut[ed] ... by shared aggression and cathartic laughter' (1995: 87). Joking exemplifies the tension that exists between male peers while also attempting to resolve issues of power through the social control of individuals. In the context of the everyday joking relationships provide entertainment and enjoyment within pub culture as the group 'has a good laugh' and 'good craic.'

Pub space and ownership

While the space of the pub is conducive to various forms of communication, it also places the individual and the group within a meaningful location. According to some informants, the allegiance that individuals form to a particular pub or grouping of pubs can be as strong as the relationships that exist between in-group members. As a fixed site the pub provides a dependability and stability, therefore

warranting individual and group loyalty. It is a point to which regulars can always return regardless of the length of their absence. A regular might come and go but the pub and the craic will remain firmly in place.

Through the experience of in-group membership and the experience of becoming a regular, pub patrons develop a sense of ownership over a third place that may be denied to them in the domestic sphere, workspace, or in other public arenas. For example, one informant noted that 'anyone I'm close to is a part of this [pub] space. We would be part of the same social scene' (B26M). Membership into a pub-based in-group helps individuals conceptually link time and history to space and place that is specific to a particular geographical locale via a group experience. Moreover, the pub provides the backdrop to the events of individual lives and group histories which are marked by the activities and events that occur within the pub. For many, time appears to be remembered in terms of, for example, 'that New Year's in Leo's' (J36M), 'that all-nighter a year ago' (P35M), 'that time I lost my glasses in Fury's' (M36F) or 'the party upstairs [at the local] after the Christening' (J36M).

The sense of solidarity that is found within in-groups can sometimes form barriers to the outside world. As a result, individuals who are not members of the in-group often avoid these places. This is especially true in neighbourhood locals, isolated country pubs, or (as previously discussed) 'masculine' pubs where in-group ownership is exclusive and strong. This is also increasingly the case in pubs that restrict access through the use of bouncers, dress codes and/or fees for entry. In some cases a sense of ownership by an in-group can develop into territoriality in which the pub is host to an exclusive in-group, as is the case in Republican pubs or sectarian pubs in Northern Ireland:

> I wouldn't go to Murray's just because it has a fiercely loyal crew in it, but Murray's wouldn't be too bad, but it has a reputation ... well, it's very much a Republican pub, [and] I'm not from that area and it's a local pub and I just wouldn't feel necessarily at home there. (J41M)

> As a pub, country pubs can sometimes be intimidating with everyone positioned at the bar and they all turn around and look at you. You're an outsider. (B26M)

As these two informants suggested, pubs can be places of exclusivity, sending out clear signals as to who is permitted and who is not. A sense of ownership, or territoriality as expressed in the above statements, is reinforced by the presence of meaningful artefacts placed throughout the interior of the pub. Artefacts and memorials provide the third place with meaning and serve to remind members of the in-group of where they come from, who and what they are, and of their relationship to each other and to place. Cultural objects used as decoration within the third place situate its inhabitants within a contextualised environment and are largely representative of their identities. It is significant to note the objects on display historically had very specific meaning to the both the individual and the community. In-groups possess the knowledge to identify the objects and understand their meaning and were likely to have significance in the everyday.

In the case of a popular 'music pub' in Sligo town (recently closed to be refurbished as a student nightclub), the interior was wallpapered with music festival posters from a recent concert to events dating many years ago. Both the publicans and the majority of pub patrons interviewed in this particular venue considered themselves to be 'music-lovers' and were particularly interested in folk and traditional Irish music. In fact, many of the regulars had attended some of the concerts and musical festivals presented on the posters.

While these very specific items create a sense of place and contribute to the formation and maintenance of the identities of the regulars, they also promote ownership over the place of the pub as they reflect the lives of the regulars. As a result the relationship of the geography of the pub to the individuals who inhabit that space leads to the creation of a sense of place and the formation of a 'home away from home.'

Pub use in rituals of transcendence

The informality of the pub presents individuals with a neutral[39] yet familiar environment to explore and transcend everyday identities. One informant, upon speculating as to why Irish people spend time in the pub, stated: 'I think it's just a social thing that people need to go to a place that's neutral' (B50F). Free from many of the pressures of both the domestic sphere and the work space, the pub as a third place offers individuals and groups opportunities to behave and project themselves in ways that might be considered inconsistent, inappropriate or unacceptable in the home, at the work place, or in other public arenas. This 'licensed familiarity of the pub' (Whitehead, 1976: 175) provides individuals with opportunities of transcendence where identities can be transformed and new roles can be explored:

> it was somewhere to go and where you could be something different from at home.... I think that that has always been the case here because I mean you can go [into a pub] and I see people, and I know their personal circumstances and what's going on with their families, and it's not opulent but they're dressing extremely well and they're drinking *and they're a new person in that environment. That's somewhere where they can be someone that they can't otherwise be. It's a way of stepping out of your otherwise tiring existence.* (J46M) (emphasis added)

For many individuals, the initial experience of transcendence occurs following a series of informal activities that are based in the public house and result in the admission into an in-group. Rites of initiation can include, for example, an extraordinary alcohol binge that might occur on a landmark birthday or some other significant social event. While some informants report entering into pub culture through celebratory events such as the stag/hen party of an older relative or friend, a birthday party, etc.; many informants' initiation into pub culture was simply marked by the first time they were permitted into a pub (usually underage), served and allowed to consume alcohol on premises. In fact, this scenario is how most

[39] Some pubs, however, discourage certain types of people from entering or spending any length of time on the premises – for example intoxicated individuals or groups. Marginalised individuals or groups might quickly discover that this neutrality is not necessarily applied to all, as has been the experience in particular times and places for women, 'blow-ins', Travellers, sociologists, etc.

interviewees describe their initial public drinking experience. A number of individuals report underage drinking with peers, usually out-of-doors or in private homes, prior to initiation into pub culture. Frequently, an alcohol binge is the outcome of the primary pub visit with many of the known regulars purchasing drinks for this first time pub participant, followed by a very public and much discussed hangover. For others, their first pub visit is an uneventful experience, yet it remains a deeply symbolic occasion that demonstrates that one is now permitted to occupy the pub and publicly consume alcohol, oftentimes prior to the legal drinking age. For many, to enter into a lifetime of pub culture signifies a transformation of identity and McNabb's historical account (1964) of pub initiation in rural Ireland continues to resonate today:

> According to local opinion, a young man[40] was initiated ... when he took his first drink in the local public house. This was a sign that he had grown up and was acceptable to the male community. (in Stivers, 2002: 85)

Once entry into the collective is established, membership is maintained through the continual participation in the rites and rituals of transcendence that underpin individual identity, status, a belonging to place, group bonding and a sense of the collective. The reoccurring practices used to maintain group membership include regular pub attendance, habitual drinking sessions that are periodically heavy, and/or participation in rounds. Campbell and Philips conclude that periodic participation in the stag party and the associated hard drinking and drunkenness is a ritual of significance that serves to maintain social bonds while acknowledging the transition/transformation of identity of a 'single male member of a strong male leisure group' (1995: 23). Similar observations can now be found at hen parties, which are an expression of female bonding where a 'team' of women rallies around the soon-to-be bride. At these parties, women dress similarly and often will sport identical T-shirts to signify group membership. Symbols of overt sexuality – usually phallic – are used to maintain the bond of the in-group as they take part in the collective objectification of men. However, these parties are distinctly

[40] In contemporary Ireland the use of the initial pub visit as a rite of passage could apply equally to males and females.

masculine as the members of the party transcend their everyday identities and temporarily partake in more aggressive and conceptually masculine role-play.

Alcohol consumption & in-group membership

Within the setting of the pub, the attainment, distribution and use of power occurs through the highly symbolic use of alcohol. Extensive alcohol consumption facilitates individual and group transcendence with shared drinking as a bonding element. In absence of the social hierarchies of the home and workplace, the pub is a location where relationships are equalised, power redistributed and identities redefined through the group experience of alcohol consumption within a shared *habitus* (Bourdieu: 1977). Under these conditions social status can temporarily dissolve and be reconstructed. Fiske (1987) suggests that the dynamic of the pub, as opposed to the oppressive relations of the family home, redefines identities and, like joking relationships, permits users to experience more egalitarian relationships with other members of the community. Drinking rituals within the pub promote group bonding and reinforce the relationships upon which social capital is based. The provision of alcohol connects individuals and groups to the place of the pub to the extent that for many, to be without a drink in the pub causes discomfort to themselves or other members of the group. One informant who recognised the relationship of alcohol to the place of the pub, notes: 'In a way I think you wouldn't feel like you were properly at the pub if you didn't have a pint. It's part of the ritual' (B26M).

In conjunction with an overall socio-economic improvement in Ireland in recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in heavy drinking amongst both males and females. Corresponding to a number of on-going quantitative studies that suggest rising levels of alcohol consumption, the majority of informants in this study report awareness of this increase and many are participants as well. Fieldwork carried out over the course of this research in a variety of pubs supports quantitative data that indicates 'binge' style consumption and other forms of hazardous drinking

behaviours have increased dramatically (Mongan *et al*, 2007).[41] By attending almost any pub on the weekend I could easily observe heavy drinking sessions. Depending on the expectations of the individual and the in-group, excessive drinking behaviour might include drinking large quantities of alcohol in one sitting, extensive drinking sessions, rapid consumption, combining drinks or drinking spirits, drug use and misuse, aggression and violence and sexual prowess.

While there has been an increase in the quantity of alcohol consumed and binge drinking has become a norm in Irish society for both women and men, the high status that extraordinary drinking sessions obtain amongst individuals, in-groups and the Irish public in general appears to be long-standing. From my research, I found drinking sessions that result in excessive behaviour often attained mythological status amongst almost all demographics. The narratives emerging from these sessions were repeated over time and sometimes became inter-generational legends. Stories were shared, for example, of events which occurred over thirty years ago. Lock-ins, where the pub was closed up while the patrons continue drinking inside after hours, were a particular source of myth making. On one such evening, a pub I was attending had locked its front doors but continued to serve drinks for some time. Being on the main street of the village, the lights were turned down so not to draw the attention of the Gardai who were on patrol. Candles were lit so we could see our drinks. The barman hushed us every time a patrol car drove by and it began to feel like we were giddy children who were hiding from the grown-ups. A few people became quite nervous about this, which only added to the hilarity of the other patrons. One woman exclaimed, 'I don't think I could make it in jail!' which resulted in uproarious laughter. She was repeatedly quoted for the rest of the evening, the next morning and over the course of the following month until the story was worn out. Having occurred over a year

[41] While definitions of binge drinking vary, it can generally be described as a pattern of alcohol consumption, drunkenness and the associated negative behaviours. The phrase 'hazardous drinking' has been coined by the World Health Organization (WHO) to describe 'a pattern of alcohol use that increases the risk of harmful consequences for the user' (Mongan, *et al*, 2007). Mongan *et al* note that '[p]eople in Ireland engage in drinking patterns that are excessive and problematic' and that '54% of Irish respondents binge drank at least once weekly' (2007: 19).

ago, the story of the evening continues to come up from time to time and the words of the nervous woman are repeated to this day. With each telling the woman in the story becomes slightly more hysterical, the Garda car more ominous.

Fig. 17 Still talking about that night... (B60M)

The narratives of these events are often repeated at subsequent get-togethers in the pub where they are often celebrated and, as described in the example above, become embellished over time. Indeed, the possibility for inclusion in this type of spontaneous and unexpected event is an essential characteristic of a successful third place and an important motivating factor for regular pub attendance. One informant admitted that the way to get her to 'go out [to the pub]' was to make her feel like she just might miss something (J40F). She revealed that she couldn't stand to think that they might have fun without her. In his description of one remarkable drinking session in a small village on the West coast of Ireland, Peace describes the unpredictability and excitement behind these seemingly random events. Although he is unable to identify the causative factor that initiates a particular experience, he simply notes that the 'drinking session had taken off in impromptu fashion, as does all "good crack" in Clontarf' (1992: 173). This suggests that there's always an opportunity for craic when in the pub and missing out on one of these unexpected events can result in ridicule, feelings of social

exclusion and disappointment. After missing out on one too many evenings, one unfortunate respondent lamented:

> I always miss out on the craic. I've always got the dose or I'm too tired or nothing's happening so I decide to head.... I'll get a slaggin' for the next six months. (G22F)

This celebratory attitude towards collective drinking and group drunkenness appears to be related to the long-standing custom of buying rounds or 'treating'. This obligatory practice is clearly used as a levelling device that is unique to the public house. Fiske argues that the compulsion for in-group members to participate and for each individual to purchase a round in turn has an instant democratising effect:

> Because it seems equal, it seems fair, though its equality is coercive: everyone is assumed to drink the same amount at the same speed. It is also immediate justice, not a nebulous system of deferred repayments. (1987: 8)

The purchasing of drinks for other members of the group re-affirms membership and therefore bonding, but also enforces group participation. One informant described this practice in her local pub and notes:

> It's seen as a whole thing where I come from ... it's got to do with generosity. If you go into a pub and you're talking to somebody, you invariably get involved with a round system with them. It's not the done thing to be standing beside somebody, engaging in conversation with somebody without either buying them a drink or them buying you a drink. And you end up reciprocating and you could end up with ten people by the end of the night. That's the done thing.... I think that it's very expensive and you end up drinking at the pace of some of the faster drinkers. And you could have three or four drinks lined up by the end of the night. (R44F)

Pressure from peer groups to participate in drinking sessions can, in some cases, be very intense towards individuals. Many times during my fieldwork I observed individuals abstaining from alcohol or limiting consumption. Often, peer group members will attempt to persuade the individual to consume or will simply purchase drinks, even after receiving instructions that the alcohol will be refused. Comments such as 'go on' or 'one more' are continuously repeated to pressurise the individual to consume more and keep up with the in-group. On a number of

occasions I observed a number of individuals submit to pressure who were selected or volunteered by a peer group to remain sober in the role of designated driver. Over the course of one evening, an individual who was pregnant at the time and had slowly consumed a glass of beer clearly stated that she wanted to only consume non-alcoholic drinks for the remainder of the evening. She was then presented with a full pint of beer, which was left on the bar.

Yet, while the practice of rounds has contributed to a tradition of heavy group consumption, it is clear that the power of the rounds system has diminished in recent years. Individuals feel less inclined to feel pressured to drink if they are unable or uninterested. Although as previously noted, pressure to consume alcohol typically continues to be exerted, especially if members of the peer group are excessively intoxicated. The majority of informants reported adhering to a more individualistic drinking pattern in which they might occasionally choose to participate in a round. As well, most interviewees were critical of the practice to varying degrees. Few informants reported to always enjoy participation in the rounds system. Older males were the most accepting of the practice, while the youngest [of either gender] interviewed were the most critical. Those living in small towns or rural areas were more likely to participate and less likely to object, as these individuals tend to accept the practice as normal regardless of their personal views. The majority of those interviewed claimed to avoid the rounds system because of cost, a disapproval for wasting money and alcohol on unwanted drinks and because of a general dislike of consuming more alcohol than is desired. In fact, the increase in the price of alcohol is cited as the most significant cause for non-participation.[42] One participant reported that the practice of buying drinks is 'a trap' that his peer group tries to avoid. He stated:

> It's really expensive. I think it adds formality to things rather than being part of a normal ritual. When you buy a drink for someone in my group you never expect it back. (W25M)

[42] Similarly reflecting how place and place behaviours are linked to social and cultural change, Peace notes that the 'early 1980s saw a relative decline the returns from fishing with the result that expansively buying rounds fell into disrepair as a regular ritual' (Peace, 1962: 172).

Another noted:

> It can be a bit stressful, financially. I mean it is part of Irish culture but they can cost a lot of money and if you're on a budget.... You know when I was broke I usen't participate. And luckily we don't really get into that, me and my friends because we're all kinda' watching our pennies as well. 'Cause I know people.... I feel they're ... these people who say, drink in pubs all day on Sunday and spend all day drinking and stuff. And they tend to buy ten rounds and my mam would be very much into that culture. I think it's very stressful. Like I have no problem buying somebody a drink but trying to buy five people a drink, you know sometimes you might have to go so you mightn't drink five drinks back. So that's way more than you normally spend. (M33F)

Women generally reported feeling less obliged to participate in rounds. For example, when asked if she would feel pressured to consume alcohol purchased for her during a round, one informant stated 'ah no, and I wouldn't and I've often left them. I just find it an awful waste of money' (R44F). While these three informants described the cultural pressure to participate, the economics of rounds drinking provided a means of resistance. This excuse also allowed them to restrict shared drinking practices to select in-group members and avoid a larger, more inclusive system of rounds. Today the circle of individuals involved in rounds appears to be smaller and more controlled, with only a small group of friends purchasing drinks for each other. This practice clearly decreases the pressure to participate equally in every round purchased. Larger and more pressurised rounds, however, continue to thrive in some local pubs - mostly rural - or in the case where heavy drinking is anticipated (mostly over weekends or at special events such as a birthday party, wedding party, a holiday, stag or hen parties or other celebratory events) and amongst certain demographics (in particular young working men, or rural/working-class males over the age of approximately 40 or men employed in particular vocations). One informant who lived in a very isolated rural area described the pressure to conform under the rounds format:

> It's just seen as awful mean if you don't [buy drinks]. And people who don't get involved in the round system would nearly be outcasts, like a social outcast in a way. (R44F)

Other individuals noted:

> I just leave the drinks and eventually someone gets the hint, but sometimes there's a bit of pressure if they begin to pile up. You'll look and see three or four pints lined up on the bar and they're all for you.... It drives you absolutely mad, ... you start to feel annoyed about it with all of the pressuring some people do and it just gets worse the longer the night goes on and the more pissed they get. (S42F)

> I don't like it. I think ... it tends to make people drink more than they would like to. If you drink at your own pace you drink what you want ... not what the heaviest drinker in the room drinks – they're the ones who dictate what you're going to be drinking. But I have to follow it every now and again, when you're out in company you have to follow the rules of the Irish drinking society which is 'ok, I'll buy this round and somebody else.'... But I don't like it and if I can stay on my own I will. (B24M)

Again, these statements indicate that there can be immense social pressure to participate in rounds drinking. These informants described the participation of this form of drinking in terms of an unwanted obligation ('the pressuring', 'rules') that he must occasionally fulfilled.

Gefou-Madianou concludes that 'it is not simply the effects of alcohol but the social construction of the sharing of certain drinks under certain circumstances which is essential for the creation of social existence and social identity' (1992: 13). The direct and immediate social outcome of the rounds custom is the effect of drinking together. While formal round drinking and group drunkenness is by no means exclusive to Ireland (similar customs can be found, for example, in Switzerland [Gibson and Weinberg, 1980], the United States, Britain and Australia [Campbell and Fairview, 1990; Campbell and Philips, 1995]), the habitual participation in drinking sessions is a common feature of pub culture. Irish pub culture is a unique phenomenon in that the pub has developed as the primary (and possibly only) third place linking alcohol consumption, place and identity.

Drinking in rounds or simply drinking together as a group in the setting of the pub creates a sense of place and is what Bales refers to as a 'symbolic':

> manifestation of the solidarity of 'friends' or kinship groups, of the acceptance of the individual male as a 'man among men,' as an equal in his own ... drinking together is a manifestation of the equality and solidarity of town and country folk, of the guest and host, the politician and his constituents, the seller and the buyer. (1962: 9)

The pub, being an exclusive site of drinking rituals, facilitates the development of bonding networks that unconsciously explore 'social existence and social identity' (Bales, 1962: 9). While collective drinking experiences and group drunkenness were traditionally associated with the construction and performance of the Irish male identity. Stiver's discussion on hard drinking practices continues to resonate in contemporary Irish pub culture:

> Hard-drinking ... was part of a rite of incorporation by which men expressed their solidarity as well as their manliness.... Hard drinking was perhaps more intimately connected with the collective and individual identity of the male.... For the group, hard drinking as a rite of incorporation signaled solidarity.... For the individual, it indicated maturity or manhood through which one took his place as an adult male ... in the larger community. (2002: 91 – 92)

However, as previously discussed, many Irish women now take part in the cultural use of alcohol and pub attendance and are active participants in the construction of hegemonic masculinities through their drinking activities in the pub.

Alcohol use as a signifier of gender

While the act of public drinking is a display of masculine identity, the product of consumption itself is an indicator of identity in regards to age, gender and displays of power. For example, while some men reported wine consumption in the home or in restaurants, they were most likely to drink beer while in the pub. One informant explained, 'I like my wine but I normally wouldn't drink wine at the pub. I would drink wine at the house with dinner' (N54M). Other men simply stated, 'I would never have wine in a pub, or a cocktail' (J41M) or 'it would be Carlsberg all of the time ... never ever drink a cocktail' (J46M). Over the course of this research, I rarely observed men consuming wine in pubs unless accompanied by a meal or during a celebration. Reflecting the findings of this research, Fiske concludes that

'beer is the bearer of culture insofar as it is cheap, egalitarian, masculine, social and, when consumed in pubs, significantly differentiated from both home (family/wife) and work (boss)' (1987: 16). In addition to drinking beer, men were also more likely to drink Bulmer's cider, which has recently undergone a dramatic marketing make-over. Traditionally considered a cheap, strong, low-status drink, Bulmer's has reinvented itself as a pure, crisp, macho and somewhat sophisticated (and expensive) beverage.

Men who fall within an older age bracket periodically consumed spirits, usually whiskey, towards the end of an evening spent drinking. This practice would almost always occur socially, with two or more men taking their drinks together. Groups of younger men, and sometimes women, might ingest large amounts of spirits during drinking binges that often begin with beer. Younger drinkers who consumed spirits typically drank alco-pops or a mixture of vodka and a mineral, usually 7-Up, Red Bull or Coca-Cola. Combining alcohol and stimulants – primarily caffeine, cocaine and/or ecstasy – was widespread among both male and female clubbers who often start the evening in the pub. This practice was reported among various social groups including a number of students, young professionals, members of the working class and artists. Strongly flavoured spirits – rum, whiskey, gin – were largely avoided by this demographic who regularly drink late into the night. One informant reported that he was:

> not a spirit drinker except for Red Bull and vodkas maybe. That would be the last sort of whiz before you head off to a nightclub, or if you're going off to a party or whatever or you're taking cocaine or whatever. (J41M)

Until recent decades, women avoided the consumption of beer in the pub and instead had mixed drinks, cocktails, wines and sweet liquors/spirits. Molloy notes that as women began to enter the pub and the gendered lounge spaces were created, different types of drinks became available: 'the arrival of new lighter drinks targeted mainly at the emerging market of women drinkers. There was a move from dark stouts to lager ales and from whiskey to vodka' (2002: 81). Today many

women continue to consume traditionally 'feminine' beverages both in the pub and at home:

> Though they may in large part refrain from drinking socially constituted male drinks in male-defined spaces, women may consume other types of alcohol, as for example wine and even sweet liqueurs, which often have very high alcohol content. (Gefou-Madianou, 1992: 9)

Guinness consumption among women appears to be intermittent or seasonal (some men report the seasonal use of Guinness as well). Some women described Guinness as a sort of medicinal tonic and consumed it when 'they feel under the weather, 'weak' or 'run-down' and the consumption of Guinness by pregnant women for its high iron content was still reported. A number of women would also drink Guinness in the winter but would switch to lighter beers, wines or cocktails in warmer weather. Men appeared to have greater brand loyalty when it comes to drinking in general, while many women selected their drink based on what they've already had to drink that evening or according to their 'mood.' Although some women would regularly drink Guinness, women typically preferred lighter beers such as Budweiser, MGD or occasionally stronger flavoured beers such as Heineken, Tiger or German or Eastern European lagers that have recently become available in a number of pubs. While drinking beer, women generally consumed smaller quantities and would sometimes drink half-glasses instead of full pints. This practice was exclusive to women. During my observations I have only ever seen one man drink his beer from a half-pint glass, which, based on the reaction of his friends, was the first and last time he ever ordered his beer in such a way. Attempts by males to order glasses of beer always resulted in the purchase of a full pint and this was sometimes observed among women as well. While many women regularly consumed beer, it continued to be perceived as a masculine product by the majority of informants in this study. A small portion of women, however, will only drink beer because of their rejection of conceptually feminine behaviour that included the consumption of 'girl' drinks. These women expressed contempt for women who drink beer from glasses, wine or cocktails in the pub that would be on par to men's attitudes towards consuming these types of products while in the pub.

Often these young women would drink heavily and may end an evening by consuming spirits. Many of these women socialised with mostly all-male groups or other women who were similar in their behaviours and were often seen as 'one of the guys,' 'like the lads' or laddish in their pub behaviour.

The contemporary pub as an agent of gender

Today many pubs consist mostly of lounge space. The recent economic boom has led to the majority of older pubs being remodelled and refurbished. This rebuilding of pubs has often involved the removal of the partition that separates lounge space (female space) from bar space (masculine space), resulting in one large open area. Women are now permitted to use all spaces of the pub yet it is mostly men who dominate the bar while women and mixed-gender couples occupy sofas, stools or chairs with tables. Also, the ratio of men to women at the bar very much corresponds with the pub type – the more 'masculine' the pub, the less likely women will position at the bar.

During interviews, many women reported to prefer the open-spaced pub to the older, more traditional lounge areas. These women, many of whom were younger interviewees, favoured the modern, less-domestic space to the 'oppressive' and 'over-bearing' lounge spaces that often, as one respondent worded it, 'remind me of me mam's house.' One woman enjoyed a particular pub because:

> It's nice and airy. I just love the space in it, you know? I love the fact that it's an old building and they've done that up ... it's just really bright, and really airy and really spacious. It's not crammed in with tables either. And they're lovely big tables in it. And there's an upstairs in it as well but it doesn't come all the way out so the ceiling is really high and it has really big glass windows so it's a really nice sense of space in it and I love the light. It's a really kind of bohemian. (M36F)

Men equally appeared to enjoy this pub type but tended to identify the familiarity of the pub clientele and bar tenders and the sense of their belonging to a place as indicators to their preference:

> The people, it has a very good feel to it, you can walk in and you can guess who's going to be there. You can walk in and know who's there. It's part of an identity and the business and the staff recognise you. It's a feeling of belonging. (F48M)

> [Pubs I like] have a certain grace about them. They have a certain integrity about them. They have a certain kind of rawness, an unprocessed feel about them. The people ... the atmosphere provides a kind of ... heterogenous mix of people. Like I was at that old man pub there and there were young people and German tourists and of course, old men ... And because they seem kind of non-mainstream they seem to provide a more honest view of the mainstream view of the world.... But that's probably just a romantic view. (J35M)

Women, while also citing familiarity of clientele as an important aspect in pub selection, related differently to the pub, tended to assess pub space differently and often based their judgement of the atmosphere on perceptions of comfort level. Women usually planned to meet friends and acquaintances in the pub as opposed to being a regular, indicating not so much ownership of place as occupation. The degree of comfort was determined by any number of factors but typically included: physical comfort (are the seats comfortable, is it crowded, is it loud, etc.), ambience, the presence of friends and if they perceived the pub to be safe as opposed to the negative descriptions of 'masculine', 'laddish', or 'rough'. The women I interviewed overwhelmingly expressed discomfort in attending pubs that are considered to be masculine, especially if unattended by a male. Women typically described masculine pubs as bar-dominated (that is with a small or absent lounge area) and with a primarily male clientele. Oftentimes, these pubs are early opening pubs, sports bars, old-man pubs and/or pubs with a regular clientele of heavy male drinkers. One informant noted that she would feel uncomfortable in what she described as 'sporty, chauvinistic type places [or] if I didn't know the people' (T30F). Many female informants report feeling 'intimidated,' 'afraid,' 'vulnerable' and at times 'threatened' by these types of pubs to the extent that several women express unease walking past the entrance unaccompanied.

While there is no explicit social control over women concerning pub attendance, most women felt restricted from participating in pub culture as men do. In some

cases this was due to what Oldenburg describes as 'the mothering role' which causes women with children to be 'eternally on duty' (1999: 232) and prevents regular socialising outside of the home. However, parenting roles have changed dramatically over the past several decades and many men have taken on greater parenting responsibilities. Several men with small children admitted that they no longer socialise in the pub to the extent that they did while childless because of a desire to see more of their children, they are expected to participate in childcare in the evenings (such as with 'babysitting', dinner, bathing and bedtime preparation), they do not want their children to see them spend so much time consuming alcohol and because of the cost of going to the pub. Nonetheless, it was still mostly mothers who report significantly curbing their pub attendance or abandoning pub culture altogether.

Other aspects of social control over the participation of women in pub culture are less overt. While considered normal behaviour for men to attend the pub alone, both male and female interviewees referred to the taboo against women attending the pub unaccompanied. One informant described her own negotiation of the territoriality of pub spaces:

> There would be a lot of pubs I would feel uncomfortable in.... I'm never inclined to feel very safe on my own [in the pub]. Whereas when you have a partner you feel you have backup, you feel more comfortable. I'm always a bit self-conscious when I walk in alone or say my sister's with me. I never really feel a hundred per cent at ease. (T65F)

In this statement, the participant revealed how she perceived a threat from pub spaces and guarded against this by arranging to have a 'backup'. She avoided entering into a pub on her own and would not attend one by herself. With the exception of going into a pub for lunch, this was the norm for the majority of female informants. Also, respondents generally assumed that a woman on her own would not remain alone – she was simply waiting to meet another person:

> I'd assume if a woman was drinking on her own she was waiting for somebody. I don't know any woman who would go to the pub on their own, to the bar alone and have a pint. (B26M)

If a woman were to indeed be unaccompanied most respondents agreed that they would consider it abnormal and feel uncomfortable. Some reported feeling 'strange,' 'worried,' 'concerned' or 'suspicious' upon seeing this occur and believed that a woman genuinely alone in a pub was 'in trouble,' 'had problems,' 'was unhealthy' or 'was irresponsible.' Being alone in the pub outside of lunchtime hours, especially if alcohol was being consumed, drew even more attention:

> I would think it was strange. If you see a woman it seems doubly unhealthy, you would wonder more about her reasons for being there. You wonder is she waiting for someone? Is something wrong? There must be a reason. (F42M)

This was especially the case if it is known that she is a mother. One respondent noted that he 'wonders who's looking after the children while she's in the pub' (D40M) and others had concerns about 'what kind of example she's setting [for her children] by going out like that?' (F34F). As well, several interviewees remarked on the social suspicion that a woman alone in a pub was in some way sexually deviant:

> I know for instance that while the women I see in pubs are not uncomfortable with [being alone] ... a lot of women I'm friendly with would never go to a pub on their own. They would die, they just couldn't do it. I suppose there would be a woman of a certain age who would be there to pick up a guy. (J46M)

> I heard [my wife] say, 'oh jeez, I don't want to go by myself to the pub' because then people will talk about it. There's this funny concept that a woman on her own in a pub is looking for business. Ireland is a very macho society and women kind of condone the behaviour of the man. (F42M)

These conceptualisations suggest that women's pub behaviour is monitored and perceived differently than that of men. Through interviews and observation, I found that women were often viewed negatively by both males and females for displaying conceptually masculine behaviour. In addition to solitary public drinking, rowdiness and drunkenness were considered less acceptable in women than in men and recent media reports concerning the increase in binge drinking

among young women has been met with a degree of panic in public discourse.[43] While many respondents deem drunkenness in men to be anywhere from 'annoying' to 'amusing,' intoxicated women were viewed with less affection and mostly seen as 'out of control,' acting like a 'slapper,' 'disgraceful' and 'embarrassing'. Younger respondents tended to be more accepting of consuming large amounts of alcohol and often described male peers who drink heavily as being 'good craic' and exciting to be out with. However, in regards to women one respondent candidly admits:

> It goes back to my sorta biased ... because I find it very hard to strike up a conversation and remain interested in a woman who's drunk or who has too much drink in her. I certainly wouldn't want to be involved with [that] person. (B24M)

Similarly, another informant reports to being unsure of 'who they [women] think they're trying to impress by carrying on [getting drunk] like that,' although he too was a self-admitted habitual binge drinker.

Many of the objections to women's behaviour in the pub occurred when reductive conceptualisations of gender are applied (i.e. that a woman is behaving 'like a man' instead of acting 'like a woman' should be). Behaviours deemed by informants of both sexes to be masculine included heavy drinking, drunkenness, belligerent or violent behaviour and sexually dominant, aggressive or predatory behaviour. The incidence of women adopting 'male' behaviours in the pub was reported by the majority of my informants, which many found 'inappropriate' to varying degrees:

> They think it's attractive. But Irish women are so strange in their mating habits.... They're hostile towards men. (N48M)

> A person is entitled to look how they want, like, but I'm sorry that just looks wrong most of the time. I don't know where they think they are but they just look slutty and no man is going to go for that, not in any kind of real way anyway. (T20F)

[43] See Morse (April 1, 2002), 'Women on a binge,' *Time Magazine*.

While younger men and women had the least objection to these displays of behaviour (and indeed, it is more often younger women who present themselves in this manner), older informants and older women in particular were the most uncomfortable with this cultural development and expressed concern for the women. Younger women tended to be the most scathing, as illustrated in the final statement above. Yet it was the male informants who overall found women who behaved in overtly sexualised manners to be aggressive and were generally disapproving: '[They look] like tarts ... provocatively, highly sexual but without any grace. Aggressively. And in clothes that are always too small for them' (J35M).

Overt and oftentimes aggressive displays of sexuality in which women take on an overtly sexual personae in the pub have been popularised and commodified in pub culture and elsewhere. The commodification of sex and the sexuality of women became apparent in pub/nightclub behaviours and activities such as foam parties, hen nights and in the celebration of laddette culture where women participate in the objectification of themselves, other women and of men (particularly on hen nights).

Ariel Levy (2006) argues that while these women are displaying a contrived and commodified version of female sexuality, it is an attempt to adopt a conceptually masculine posture and in effect, attain male power. Commonly referred to as 'laddettes', many of my informants viewed these women as 'masculine' and in their drinking and sexual behaviours:

> Raunch provides a special opportunity for a woman who wants to prove her mettle. It's in fashion, and it is something that has traditionally appealed exclusively to men and actively offended women, so producing it or participating in it is a way both to flaunt your coolness and to mark yourself as different, tougher, looser, funnier – a new sort of loophole woman who is 'not like other women,' who is instead 'like a man.' (Levy, 2006: 96)

Many women admitted to feeling uncomfortable with this behaviour but participate nonetheless, often through their physical appearance:

> I like the clothes but when [I wear them in] the pub I feel a bit daft. I don't like how people say things to you, you know? It's like I have to be all clever or something. (A22F)

Another interviewee notes:

> I feel like [my friends] are in competition with each other, like every time we go out we try to out do each other ... who can wear the shortest skirt ... and who can pull the most that night. [My friend] bought these ridiculous boots with these giant heels that were like this [holds fingers apart about five inches]. We were laughing because her mum gave out to her and said they looked like, you know, a prostitute's boots. Like the kind Julia Roberts wore in [the movie] *Pretty Woman*. (N19F)

As these two participants demonstrated, pub places reflect and act as a location to reinforce gender dynamics. The pub provides an ideal location for the exploration and display of this post-feminist phenomenon. By adopting male social behaviours[44] in the pub, individual women attempt to engage with identities of power not available to them in the everyday. Gefou-Madianou suggests that some women are '[s]hunning the domestic role, they seek, with questionable success, to achieve a 'male' type of transcendence through alcohol drinking' (1992: 26). She adds that 'it might be argued that women, by seeking to display their equality through the use of male symbols, simply reinforced the established order' (Gefou-Madianou: 9).

By allowing women access to the pub, by permitting her to become an active participant in the public arena and through increased access to social networks and social capital, women can now, in most cases, comfortably use the pub as a third place. However, although pub culture has become more inclusive and women have gained greater access to the third place the pub continues to remain a male geography. The ratio of men to women in pubs observed throughout this research is also an indication of the pub as a male preserve. As previously noted, interviews

[44] According to Levy: 'Women who've wanted to be perceived as powerful have long found it more efficient to identify with men than try to elevate the entire female sex to their level.... There is a certain kind of woman – talented, powerful, unrepentant – whom we've always found difficult to describe without some version of the phrase "like a man," and plenty of those women have never had a problem with that' (2006: 95).

and observations found that women who go to the pub unaccompanied receive disproportionate levels of concern, judgement and sometimes condemnation, especially if they are consuming alcohol and if they are mothers. Fiske notes that many changes in pub culture are superficial and asserts that the pub continues to function as a masculine domain:

> Changes in the formal structure of pubs are connected with changes in the level of seriousness with which the needs of women are taken and the degree to which the pub is seen as entirely a masculine precinct.... While updated and civilised, the pub still employs many of the same ideological principles embedded in its origins. (1987: 2)

While overt 'gender territories' have diminished in the majority of pubs, pub culture and pub-based activities continue to be conceptually masculine in nature. Masculine identity continues to be inextricably linked to an Irish identity and the place of the pub. As a third place, the pub remains an essential identity-resolving forum in which masculine identities are forged and in which both men and women participate.

Conclusion

Until recently, rural populations primarily worked in isolation and were limited in their everyday encounters with individuals outside of the family. The rural pub provided an everyday site for male interaction in which social discourse could casually and spontaneously occur. Today the pub continues to provide a space that facilitates the formation of a variety of relationships but has become somewhat more inclusive of women. The everyday encounters that occur within pub places link people to place and act as identity-resolving forums. Social drinking practices are integrated into this process and the pub, as a primary site for alcohol consumption in Ireland, plays a significant role in the identity construction of individuals, groups and communities.

Dramatic changes in the rural social economy have significantly altered the structure and the role of the community in recent years. Although the

contemporary pub continues to provide a semi-public point of assembly among a dispersed population, the growth of suburbanisation and issues of modernity are leading to an increasingly individualised and fragmented society. As a result, individuals are becoming more selective about membership into in-groups, and as I will discuss in the following chapter, the role of community based/bridging in-groups are increasingly under threat as the third place has been co-opted into a consumable object for the use of the individual.

Chapter Six: *The Pub as a Site of Leisure*

> In the areas set aside for leisure, the body regains a certain right to use, a right which is half imaginary and half real, and which does not go beyond an illusory 'culture of the body,' an imitation of natural life. Nevertheless, even a reinstatement of the body's rights that remains unfulfilled effectively calls for a corresponding restoration of desire and pleasure. The fact is that consumption satisfies needs, and that leisure and desire, even if they are united only in a representation of space (in which everyday life is put in brackets and temporarily replaced by a different, richer, simpler and more normal life), are indeed brought into conjunction... (Lefebvre, 1991: 353)

> Although its functions may have changed, the pub's role as a centre of Irish life has been maintained into the 21st century, sustained by a peculiar social culture and an expanding tourist industry, and sustaining in turn an image of the Irish as a native of heavy drinkers. (Smyth, 2001: 124)

> I can't wait to get drunk with an Irishperson! (overheard pronouncement of an American tourist on an inbound flight to Ireland) (J36M)

Introduction

Ireland has long been a country that has hosted tourists and currently attracts millions of visitors every year. The economic benefits of tourism have made maintaining the industry a national priority and consequently, the Irish government and the Irish tourist board have devised sophisticated methods of attracting tourists to the country. As a result, particular representations of Ireland have become international signifiers of national identity. In addition to the representation of the rural geography that Ireland offers for tourist consumption, the country also markets a specific brand of cultural leisure to be consumed by tourists as 'authentically'[37] Irish. As a result, pub culture and the pint in particular have become distinctly Irish symbols and the opportunity to participate in this culture draws many people to the country. As the pub functions as the quintessential third place in Ireland and is inherently linked to the construction of individual and group

[37] Jane Jacobs (1961) describes the authenticity of place as having a genuine ethos of historic or contemporary meaning or context present. She notes that authentic places derive character and meaning from their local sources founded in history, materials, climate, environment and physical geography and culture.

identities, the permeation (and at times saturation) of tourists into this site of the everyday has, I will argue, contributed to transforming conceptualisations of contemporary Irish identity.

In this chapter I will briefly discuss the development of contemporary Irish identity by tracing the co-option of negative conceptualisations of Irish diasporic identity and the social transformation of signifiers of 'Irishness' – in particular the Irish pub - into identities of power (Brody, 1974). This transformation has been facilitated in part by the emergence of a new form of tourism that continues to remain prevalent. Diaspora tourism and Irish-American tourism in particular have helped to shape contemporary pub culture[38] and transformed the use of the Irish pub as a third place. In this sense, place is constructed to meet the identity needs of tourists.

The anticipation of diaspora visitors to [re]claim identity through participation in the everyday has resulted in frequent visits to the public house. Participation in the bonding networks that are situated in the third place has become a key activity for visitors into Ireland and consequently, the pub has emerged as one of the primary representations of Irishness. Some pubs have been constructed expressly to draw in tourists, but most pubs have become tourist*ed* (Cartier and Lew, 2005: 3):

> as places [tourist*ed* landscapes] represent an array of experiences and goals acted out by diverse people in locales that are subject to tourism but which are also places of historic and integral meaning, where 'leisure/tourism' economies are also local economies, and where people are engages in diverse aspects of daily life. (Cartier and Lew, 2005: 3)

As a result, tourist discourse has been germane to the construction of a modern pub culture. The impact of this transgression of tourism into the third place is of particular interest. The projection of perceived notions of Irishness that largely draws on the rural idyll, onto the Irish people at leisure has, I will argue, dramatically changed the place of the pub, the individuals who inhabit the pub and Irish identity on a number of levels. Attempts by the host community to satisfy the

[38] For example, St Patrick's day celebrations, opening hours on Sundays and extended summertime opening times have been influenced, in part, by the needs of tourists.

touristic quest for authenticity through the projection of specific and pre-defined paradigms within the space of the pub have altered the way in which many Irish people define and experience identities of Irishness. Consequently, Irish identity has become commodified, 'othered' and subjected to the gaze of the tourist.

This chapter will address the touristic consumption of this manufactured notion of Irish 'culture' and its relationship to the contemporary Irish pub. I will outline some of the problems inherent in such constraints of 'culture' for touristic consumption in relation to Ireland and examine the repercussions on the host population as a primary site of everyday life - the Irish pub - has been co-opted and reconstructed for the tourist gaze. Here, I further examine the affect of place on people – in this case those everyday places that have been touristed (Cartier and Lew, 2005: 3) - and the role that people play in the formation of place.

As Ireland engages in a capitalistically driven society, the application of post-modern conceptualisations to the construction of identities has been accelerated. Like the tourists, Irish identities are simulated through the affiliation of predetermined signs. This chapter will explore the rationalising of the construction of pub culture for touristic consumption and the emergence of a new middle-class Ireland that relates to the alienated values of the tourist.

Irish diasporic identity, tourism and the pub

As the Irish diaspora attempted to integrate into host communities, the desire to maintain cultural connections with the homeland was significant to their development as a distinctive cultural group. The application of Anderson's concept of the 'imagined community' (1983) is useful in understanding how emigrant Irish communities related to their nation of origin. According to Anderson, a nation is:

> an imagined ... community.... It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear from them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (1992: 6)

Agnew notes that place is 'interconnected and contiguous' and that a sense of place 'can be *projected ... The sense of place need not be restricted to the scale of the locality*' (1987: 263) (emphasis added). Within the context of the Irish diaspora, the imagined community provided a conceptual framework so that a sense of place could be maintained as new identities of Irishness were forged outside of the homeland.

The landscape of Ireland became a crucial aspect of the collective memory of the homeland. For the Irish-American, the pub emerged as the geographical continuum of an imagined Ireland and as a result, developed as a specific sign of Irish ethnic identity. The diaspora pub as an identity-resolving forum can be seen in Reilly's observations of an Irish-American pub:

> Though most of these patrons are native-born American citizens, the ethnic identity has not left them. And the ethnic tavern in America has helped to reinforce or educate its patrons in their own identity.... Though growing fainter as time passes, the 'Old Country' is still recalled by the immigrants who frequent the bar.... [An Irishman] who has never been anywhere near the Emerald Isle can (and usually will) pridefully boast of his ancestry. It is a badge of identity to him, no cause for shame or silence. It is an integral part of his identity and he is justly proud of it. (1976: 577)

As the pub emerged as the primary representational space for the diaspora, drinking developed as the principal mechanism for identity transcendence:

> the old culture is never dissolved all at once; rather, it is transformed, idealised, and romanticised to meet the new conditions of the New World. Thus hard drinking, disembodied from its previous context of meaning in Ireland, grew in significance in America as a means of identification among Irish-Americans and as a synthesis of group identity and individual and group adjustment ... (Stivers, 2002: 137)

Stivers notes that 'in America [the pub] was a symbol of Irish identity' (2002: 129). Pubs, taverns and bars in Irish emigrant communities became locations where the diaspora explored and recreated newly constructed ethnic identity and participated in 'national types ... of consumption and leisure activities' (Agnew, 1987: 254). Membership into these in-groups was often replicated among other institutions of

ethnic identity, such as various fraternal orders. Reilly notes the continued use of the pub as a third place and its role in identity construction:

> The links between the American Irishman and his cousins in Ireland would become most apparent in barroom culture, a place in time and space where one can 'let his hair down' and relax. As the ethnic neighbourhood is a 'safe harbour' for the ethnic group, then the ethnic tavern is probably the most inviolate of all of its many nooks and crannies. (1976: 577)

As Irish emigrant communities gradually integrated into the host communities and attained social status, dominant conceptualisations of Irish identity were redirected, forming new hegemonies and discourses of the diaspora[39] in which negative ideologies gradually transformed into identities of power. The emergence of a homogenous collective memory that included signifiers of identity was formed, especially within the mythologised context of American self-made individuality. Irish-Americans became particularly interested in identities of Irishness and revised and reconstructed the history, place and identity of Ireland through the values of America.

Negative ethnic stereotypes were transformed into benign caricatures but continued to rely on 'a narrow identity or definition of being Irish' (Moane, 1994: 259). Portrayals of Irish immigrants as brutish and drunk softened into images of playfulness, wit and strength. The reputation for excessive drinking remained but was remade into a positive attribute reflecting upon the Irish ability to partake in leisure with ease. Thus the construction of a 'new' Irish identity among the diaspora permitted full assimilation into host communities while also maintaining a sense of national identity upon which individuality could be defined. Conceptual understandings of the imagined community tended to remain static and become idealised. Stocks describes the development of Irish identity focusing on culture and heritage, claiming it has 'been depicted as a country with a relaxed way of life,

[39] See Robin Cohen's 'nine common features of a diaspora' which include: 'collective memory and myth about the homeland ... history and achievements,' an 'idealisation of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation,' and a 'strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and a belief in a common fate' (1997: 26).

quaint thatched cottages and old men sipping pints of Guinness, and a wealth of history and legend' (1996: 252).

Within the last century, rural Ireland has become an important site of return for the diaspora, including multiple generations of Irish-Americans, Hiberno-British and Irish-Australians. The desire to reconnect with the homeland has been facilitated by an increasing access to wealth, leisure time and travel. Members of the Irish emigrant community travel to Ireland and like other diaspora populations, come 'in search of their roots and their routes with aims of reaffirming and reinforcing their identities' (Coles and Timothy, 2004: 14):

> These trips often take the form of secular pilgrimages, are practised by diaspora members in the ... hope of discovering more about themselves, their ancestry, their heritage, their families and their extended communities. (Coles and Timothy, 2004: 14)

As tourists, the need of the diasporic visitor is defined by an individual attempt to transcend the everyday identity to form a sense of belonging and wholeness. As a result, the act of tourism becomes a representational event of conceptually meaningful leisure:

> The term tourist ... has a quite specific meaning.... While all tourists are vacationers, the converse is not always true, notwithstanding the approach taken by the contemporary typology of leisure, which makes "tourism" a generic concept and 'vacation' a specific notion. Tourism, a special way of spending vacation time generally described as travelling for pleasure, *is often subject to approximate definitions*. The *tourist becomes a person* with some leisure time to spare that he or she devotes to travelling. (Urbain, 2003: 2) (emphasis added)

In his analysis of contemporary tourism, American sociologist Dean MacCannell (1989) defines the tourist as an essentially post-modern figure: 'alienated ... nomadic, placeless, a subjectivity without spirit, a 'dead subject' participating in an essentially post-modern procedure' (*xvi*). Tourism, he implies, incorporates most of the fundamental concepts of postmodernism: fragmentation, decontextualisation, the 'end of history', pastiche and the internalisation of culture. MacCannell outlines the economic power of tourism, one of the world's largest industries, and

the way the unconscious post-modern attitude and middle-class values of tourism contribute to the 'shifting grounds' of modernity (1989).

According to MacCannell, being a tourist is a post-modern experience on a number of levels. By its very nature tourism embraces alienation and displacement and is saturated in what Lucy Lippard (1989) refers to as 'pomo-delicacies'. Tourism blurs social and economic relationships by which modern society defines itself, and as a result, culture becomes conceptually de-contextualised, commodified and globalised. However, this cultural reconfiguration effects not only the tourist, but also is of consequence to the host community.

The tourist consciousness is mediated by a system of signs marking attractions. As an alienated spectator, the tourist is interested only in the surfaces presented to the individual who then uses those experiences to fulfil the need of authenticity and to define and forge their own individualistic identities. This introduces the individual to what Lowenthal (1998) terms an 'end of history' ideology. Lippard describes this phenomenon as 'all surface and no depth, the death of a critical, revolutionary, and free subject' (1989: *xvi*). Individuals participate in the mass-consumption of aesthetics and move within a 'system of aesthetic surfaces' (MacCannell: 6). As such, tourism propels the post-modern processes of late capitalism: the production of aesthetics as commodities. MacCannell reinterprets Marx's notion of the 'fetishism of commodities' as 'pure experience, which leaves no material trace ... which is manufactured and sold like a commodity' (1989: 21). The tourist transposes idealised cultural signs for an individualised conceptualisation of utopia. Like Cartier and Lew's (2005) concept of tourist*ed* places embedded in the everyday, sociologist H. M. Enzenberger (1964) posits that tourists are in search of an ideal place outside of their *own* everyday lives and perceives the tourist as:

> a sort of revolutionary who finds himself [sic] unable to change the world and changes his [sic] own world instead. He [sic] sublimates his frustration by gaining access, in the mode of simulation (evasion or exile, temporary disorientation or 'reacclimatisation'), to utopian situations and representations that are normally repressed by social standards ... given that most vacations are most often perceived as a period of metamorphosis during which each

> individual can acquire what he or she lacks and live according to his or her own preferences. (Urbain, 2003: 4)

Observations carried out in pubs that had become touristed suggest that visitors tend to have specific cultural expectations of their visit to Ireland of which the locals are very aware. The anticipation of an 'authentic' Irish experience - what one informant called 'the real deal' (D29M) - taking place in the pub usually included a fairly predictable list of authenticating experiences. Pints of Guinness, live traditional Irish music, fish and chips and the presence of Irish people (and hopefully a bit of 'chat') within a traditionally-styled pub (one that is largely absence of signs of modernity). The small town and rural pub conceptually situated within the rural idyll and in the role of a third place, particularly coincides with the touristic ideal of social harmony, comfort, community and pleasure.

Fig.18 First visit to Ireland.

Tourists express a need to rectify their sense of modernity, according to MacCannell, by 'seeking "authenticity" in other places' (1989: 9). He notes, 'for moderns … authenticity [is] thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and

other cultures' (1989: 3). The diasporic tourist is especially inclined to accept this understanding of authenticity as many have located their identities in an imagined community of Ireland. The tourist industry meets the touristic need for authentic, everyday sites of leisure through the manufacturing of heritage and culture. This experience is highlighted for tourist consumption through a system of signs marking attractions: historical markers, guide books, souvenirs, etc. It is through this highlighting that the package of authenticity of experience is confirmed. However, because much of the experience is manufactured for tourist consumption the authenticity becomes questionable, as only the sign of the experience can be truly authenticated. The experience itself becomes simulation that inevitably results in an uncertainty over what is real and what is fabricated. Consequently, a conceptual dilemma emerges for the host community as various social institutions are co-opted and developed in order to create sites of tourism to reflect a touristic (and often diasporic) discourse of place. Places that allude to a non-tourist entry into the geography of everyday social space and perhaps most-importantly, that project an atmosphere of authenticity become prime locations for tourist development. As a result, the opportunity to leisurely participate in the everyday has led to the commodification and consumption of the Irish pub.

As the number of tourists has gradually increased, Ireland has responded by providing facilities to meet the needs of visitors. The touristic need for authentic experiences to initiate personal transformation and alter identity has significantly influenced the construction of heritage and the development of heritage industry. Aitchison notes the influence of tourist perceptions of Irishness on the construction of heritage and claims that the 'attempt to create and market an identity based on a unique heritage must coexist, however, with the need to facilitate the tourist's identification with that identity' (1999: 64). Within touristic discourse, the pub has been deliberately projected not only as an everyday place but also as a site for the maintenance and production of heritage and culture. As a result, the development of a tourism industry has transformed the Irish third place, significantly contributing to the formation of contemporary Irish identity.

The pub as a cultural tourist product

In addition to the marketing of the Irish rural idyll, Ireland also sells itself to the international tourist market as being a site of a remarkable cultural experience. The 'land of saints and scholars' image portrays Ireland as being a nation of great creative output. Images of Ireland's great writers can, for example, be found adorning posters, calendars, T-shirts and other souvenirs available for touristic consumption and their words can be found stitched into the fabric of Aer Lingus seats. Tourists visit Ireland hoping to find evidence of the great historical production of literature, drama, storytelling and music; and like the regulars, hope to locate, produce and participate in the craic. However, presenting an idea of 'culture' itself as a 'cultural experience' for mass consumption is particularly challenging and problematic to the tourist industry. The answer has been to integrate the nostalgic cultural representations of the 'creative spirit' of Ireland into a grounded and consumable commodity. Irish pub culture has been created and promoted as a tourist product. As tourists seek out an authenticity which Barbara O'Connor describes as being 'no longer possible in their [own] everyday live[s],' (1997) the pub has become an attractive site for tourists to locate, explore and experience authenticity and to gaze upon the natives as they participate in leisurely activities. It is this blurring of reality in the manufactured tourist experience and its incursion into social institutions, into the everyday lives of the native population and into *the* primary site of Irish leisure [the Irish pub] that is particularly interesting in the context of contemporary Ireland.

The idea has been projected and promoted that the Irish pub is an institution residual of a peasant culture, where the common man was comfortably able to muse, have interesting discussion and find intellectual and creative stimulation. This is not, as previously noted, entirely inaccurate as the pub was the locus for informal social interaction and was often/is currently the site of much discussion, debate, music, entertainment and fun and leisure as indicated in earlier chapters. This aspect of pub life, however, has become romanticised, mythologised and

marked as a guide for touristic attraction, the 'Joycean' award being the highest distinction for a pub. This image has been expressly packaged as an event for tourists in guidebooks and in the organisation of literary or traditional music pub-crawls. On a more ideological level it places the cultural representation of Ireland's creative history in the generalised location of Irish pubs and among the general population of Irish people. In doing so it begins to blur the reality of those places and people who, wittingly or unwittingly, participate in the manufactured cultural experience. In her discussion of the tourist gaze in Ireland, O'Connor notes how Irish people are often viewed as a fundamental aspect of tourist promotion:

> one of the most striking features of tourist imagery is the way in which Irish people are represented. They are regarded as *an essential ingredient* in the publicity package. In fact, objectification of the 'other' is an integral part of the entire tourist process and experience, whether in terms of landscape, architecture, artefacts, the past or the people. (1997: 72) (emphasis added)

Tourist literature, for example, often describes the Irish as clever and loquacious, witty and as having a sort of insatiable appetite for banter, debate and gossip. A lively discussion on a popular national radio programme concerning 'Brand Ireland' was aired, in which experts and listeners debated on ways to promote and 'sell' Ireland to visitors. One listener suggested that it was the Irish ability to 'chat' that should be used to draw tourists (*Ryan Tubridy Show*, May 3, 2006). By locating the touristic cultural experience of the 'creative spirit of Ireland' in Irish pubs and amongst Irish people, the way is paved for a staged authenticity of cultural representation in both those places and in those people. Pubs become symbolic sites of cultural production and their Irish patrons' symbolic embodiments of that production, their conversations turned into a form of 'art'.

The ways in which this staged authenticity has affected the development of the Irish pub is significant. This central site of everyday life has to some extent been re-created to serve functionally as a space for the touristic consumption of atmosphere. For example, artefacts of a nostalgic, largely pre-industrial peasant understanding of the public house have been decontextualised to serve as *general* signs marking the cultural production of a public house. While historically the

décor of a pub would reflect and represent the inhabitants of locale[40], Irish pubs have now been sub-divided into a number of themed categories.

The deliberate attempt to draw visitors 'through the commodification of their distinctive themes, motifs, attributes and conditions' appeals to the tourist in search of an authentic reference to the self (Coles and Timothy, 2004: 21). Williams and Chrisman describe how signs of identity resonate for the diaspora tourist:

> Just as alcohol has culturally determined psychological and physiological effects on the individual, so does, one could argue, the pub. The contemporary Irish pub is designed to ensure comfort and ease through the use of ambience and the manipulation of nostalgia. Tourists search for this "structure of feeling" within the geography of the pub as they recognise and identify familiar signifiers of an ethnic identity. (1994: 145)

Thus:

> These supply-side accounts describe the emotional devices and nostalgic triggers, policies and strategies, products and marketing campaigns intended to attract members of the diaspora to consume destinations. (Williams and Chrisman, 1994: 145)

Contemporary pub interiors are randomly adorned with items whose function is to provide ambience and suggest a theme reflective of lifestyle. During the fieldwork, discussions with bar staff and patrons produced various interpretations as to the function and meaning of various artefacts placed around the spaces of the pubs (see *figures 19 – 22, 23 – 25*, p. 188, p. 190). In many cases, the objects themselves were unrecognised or unrecognisable:

> What do I think of this place? [laughs] Well the deer heads (mounted on the wall) are a nice touch [laughs]. It's got that kind of farming-hunting theme going with the ... sickles on the wall. To be honest I'm not sure why they put that there or what's it for? I suppose it's for the tourists.... It's just what's seen to be done in the pub. It was really big in the 80s like for all the Americans ... but you don't notice it really. (K41M)

In some cases, objects were recently purchased from pub outfitters during a refurbishment. On my behalf a regular in one pub investigated a number of dusty

[40] In the pubs of rural Australia, Fiske surmises that the 'bare utilitarianism of pub décor has much in common with certain kinds of workplace' and concludes that the actual presence of the tools was

books that were haphazardly piled on a shelf, only to discover they were fake (see *figure 22*): 'Holy God! They don't even open. I don't believe it!' (J41M). This pub had been outfitted to appear much older and had 'faux-finished' the interior walls so that they looked cracked, worn and yellow with age (see *figure 21*). According to the locals, the pub used to be 'plain' and old – linoleum floors, a bit grotty and very small. Since its reinvention, it now appeared older, with water stains painted onto the walls, snugs retro-fitted and an old telephone booth (see *figure 19*) had been randomly installed in the back. New 'old' photographs and newspapers had been framed and mounted that referred to momentous events in Irish and Irish emigrant history (the sailing of the *Titanic* for example). According to one informant, rumour had it that cobwebs had been sprayed from a can when the pub first opened until they could be acquired naturally (R44F).

Figs.(clockwise) 19 - 22 Pub props (Fig. 20 Celtic Dragon Pub Co., n.d.).

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to remind the patrons that they were no longer at work but at leisure (1987: 10).

The presence of artefacts from the past attempts to connect with a lost history and to award meaning to the present. If one can choose their own identity through the process of consumption and affiliation, then one is also capable of allocating meaning. These artefacts - ancient fishing nets and fishing equipment, pre-industrial agricultural tools and other mysterious, antiqued objects - serve as symbols, but have been stripped of their local, particular and inter-personal meaning and now merely serve in the construction of ambience and atmosphere, creating a sort of non-educational heritage museum effect. Slattery notes that:

> the modern pub reputedly was a place of rest from the daily imposition of work or, indeed, during long epochs of repression and unemployment, a place to eke out a few pints against a backdrop of mandatory idleness. The contemporary pub deploys implements from a false historical consciousness as the props of leisure to remind one of the industry of the past. (2003: 140 - 141)

Slattery suggests that 'while relaxing in the postmodern ... pub, along with the tourists, we are made nostalgic for an allegedly simpler past. But this is to suppose that the postmodern pub is a site for relaxation' (2003: 140). Slattery suggests that 'it does not facilitate relaxation. Instead, it promotes an anxiety about the present in the form of a constant engagement with the past' (Slattery, 2003: 140-141). He further argues that the 'museumification' of the pub is underway (Slattery, 2003: 129) (see *figures 23 – 25,* p. 190). In fact, businesses engage in the marketing of pub paraphernalia to pubs in Ireland and abroad (see *figure 20*). Indeed, entire 'Irish pubs', complete with paraphernalia, are constructed and shipped to sites around the world. The Irish pub in and of itself has become a product of consumption. This phenomenon has not gone without observation by the Irish themselves.

> It's a bit plastic paddy-ism now, bought out of kit and stuff and designed by Guinness, and it's the same.... I mean you could be walking into *The Strand* [her local pub] or you could be walking into a pub in [Spain] like. (R44F)

Figs 23 - 25. Display case and artefacts.

As the 'leisure' space of the pub becomes decontextualised and made into a cultural production, the leisure activities within that space also become decontextualised for both the observer and the observed. Leisure becomes a production, and therefore inherently un-leisurely. As a result, Irish people at leisure in Irish pubs have become cultural representations of an authentic experience for touristic consumption; an Ireland that is constantly – even when at leisure – engaging in the production of culture. Some informants believe that the excesses of pub behaviour, drinking in particular, are at times indulged in as an affiliation to ethnic identity:

> Sure I lived in Germany for two years and that's all the people did. That's what all the Irish were doing there, talk about living up to the stereotypes. Like we used to go out and drink from 10 o'clock at night till 6 o'clock in the morning and I used to start my work at half six. The pubs closed at something like quarter to five, no, quarter to six and I used to get a tram straight to work. We all did it. They seemingly had a vending machine in the hotel I used to work in because you can get beer everywhere in Germany, you can get it in McDonalds, but they had to take it out because of all the Irish. (D39M)

> You see it's weird because it's terrible ... part of me thinks 'ah yeah sure that's great' but it's also seen as 'oh yeah aren't the Irish great craic because they're such great drinkers' ... maybe I wouldn't now because I'm not a big drinker anymore so much. But then it was great because people loved you. They were like 'oh, you Irish, you're mad'. Then they would be really nice to you and really friendly. It's seen as very fun. (W34F)

> The way I look at it, we had the same reputation years ago, seemingly it's the culture. But at the moment it's gone overboard. Well, ... I think people will make that excuse, 'well it's our culture, so you do it'. That's my views. (T65F)

> There is a bit of the romanticising of the drink, of being drunk even. (F44M)

Within this process a blurring of 'reality' occurs by replacing a pre-industrial understanding of what is 'true' with simulacrum: a decontextualised 'cultural representation' of reality. O'Connor argues that the Irish have been [re]'constructed as "other" to cater for the leisure needs of the metropolitan centres of Europe and North America' (1997: 69). She goes on to further suggest that this 'construction has ... a number of negative implications for the local population in terms of their sense of identity' and argues that the tourist's gaze 'plays a significant role in providing a native self-image – a way of perceiving ourselves as an ethnic group and a way of relating to outsiders' (1997: 69).

Although this simulacrum is manufactured for touristic consumption, within the context of contemporary Ireland its creation also serves the needs of a fragmented and decontextualised Irish population: the 'shifting ground' of Irish middle-class. The recent acceleration of modernity, the development of a globalised Ireland, and the emergence of middle-class values have developed in tandem with the touristic need to produce and consume signs of identity. In this process, individuals within Irish society have increasingly internalised manufactured cultural representations of themselves. As Ireland has embraced modernity, alienation, identity confusion and the search for authenticity have become features of contemporary Irish culture.[41] As a result, even when at home or at leisure the Irish are now active participants in their own production and consumption:[42]

[41] These concepts will be explored in chapters seven and eight.

[42] Nonetheless, the process of consumption is neither static nor homogenous as many individuals from both the tourist community and the host community experience variation in their perceptions (Smyth, 2001: 111).

> in a world where some form of travel, leisure and tourist-gazing are within the compass of more people than ever before in the West – including Ireland – we are all tourists now. (O'Connor, 1997: 40)

Within the context of the pub, the differentiation between 'native' space and 'tourist' space has become highly marginal and in many cases the Irish and the tourist populations mingle extensively. The decontextualisation of space and the construction of 'atmosphere' have extended to almost every contemporary Irish pub and, as a result, Irish people have begun to consume produced identities of themselves. Simulacrum has become a contemporary ideology. Indeed, it is rare to identify or locate a pub that is truly 'authentic', as authenticity has become impossible to recognise or identify.

Conclusion

Tourists have been attracted into the country for many years and as a result representations of Ireland have been promoted by the tourist industry as signs for Irish culture and the nation as a whole. Access to leisure within the everyday has been a powerful marketing draw for tourists who are in search of an authentic cultural experience. The Irish pub, while maintaining its central role as a third place, has become commodified and fallen under the gaze of the tourist. Tourist conceptualisations of Irishness have become significant in the construction of contemporary pub culture.

As MacCannell notes, the tourist is driven to satisfy the middle-class desire to transcend differentiation in a fragmented world by the incorporation of difference through cultural productions and consumption. This sense of fragmentation arises from a post-industrial construction of social identity that is achieved through life-style rather than occupation. Ireland is not exempt and in many ways because of the highly technological, highly productive new 'industries' created here, Ireland is exceptionally fragmented. Albert Borgmann (1987), in his study of technology and contemporary society, claims the post-industrial fragmentation of society is exacerbated by technology. The use of personalised technologies, as will be

discussed in the following chapter, facilitates the construction of a chosen identity by filtering culture and providing an accessory to lifestyle. Borgman notes that what 'distinguishes technological life ... is its division into surfaces' (1987: 135). The 'improved productivity' of a post-industrial society, he writes, 'entails the degradation of work and greater consumption leads to more distraction.' 'Mindless labour,' he asserts, 'leads to mindless leisure' (1987: 94). Thus, through what Baudrillard calls 'the liquidation of all referentials,' (2002: 146) the middle-class tourists in Ireland are starting from the same ideological point as MacCannell's middle-class tourists and use the same conceptual framework to transcend these 'shifting grounds'. Cultural productions manufactured to provide tourists with an authentic experience of Irish culture have in many ways become reality for the host community. In MacCannell's words, they 'dissolve into' their own cultural production (1979: 31). O'Toole agrees, arguing that the 'process of making people observers of their own lives, audiences for their own culture, tourists of their own landscapes had been set in train' (1994: 44 - 45). According to Baudrillard, 'the simulacra is never that which conceals the truth – it is the truth that conceals that there is none – the simulacrum is true' (2002: 145). This replacement of 'truth' with replication in contemporary Ireland is abetted by the manufacturing of heritage and cultural production for consumption. Because the needs of the tourist class, and diasporic tourists in particular, match the needs of a new middle-class that has developed in modern Ireland, and as a result, a sort of 'disneyfication' process is underway. Society's long-term understanding of self is disrupted and leads to a false sense of identity:

> A 'culture' is named, and stereotyped. The visitor seeks to see the characteristics of the image of the culture, and the host society provides the expected 'treat'. Boorstin's 'pseudo-event' is born. But the danger is that the myths are incorporated into the culture; succeeding generations do not know anything but the enactment of a past that may not have existed, and come to accept it. (Ryan, 1991: 154)

Chapter Seven: *The Problem of Place and the Irish Pub*

> See myself here, sitting on the fence, looking around me and thinking on the hundreds of things that are gone. I see the change that has come in life in my in my own memory, the importance and the snobbery. There are white stockings on the burned heels today and the back of the hand given to the customs and manners of the old and alternative life being led. It can't be helped, I suppose, because life is changing as the years are passing by. (Sayers, 1971: 48)

Introduction

Modernisation[43] and the gradual dissolution of Irish rural life as observed by Brody (1974) and McNabb (1964) resulted in a widespread shift in the role of the individual in the community, leading to the emergence of new social patterns. Modernity gradually led to the transformation of Ireland functioning as a largely agrarian, community-based society to an increasingly individualised capitalistic society. Substantial increases in disposable income created greater opportunities for the interrelated activities of modern leisure and consumption. Like the tourist, organised leisure time with an emphasis on consumption has become more prevalent.

More recently, the accelerated social changes of the Celtic Tiger have propelled Ireland into a globalised and postmodern society characterised by new modes of social interaction and identity construction. Consequently, a social dynamic between the past and the present has emerged resulting in what has been described as a 'collision culture' (Keohane and Kuhling, 2002).[44] As a result, the social restructuring of modernity within the context of a contemporary Ireland has stimulated a unique reconfiguration of space, place and identity. Soja's (2003) description of a postmodern restructuring, 'a sequential combination of falling apart

[43] Rural areas were opening to railways and later automotive travel, the ability to purchase ready-made products as well as gaining access to national newspapers, radios, televisions and other forms of media became available to increasing numbers. The exposure to these outside influences and the ability for individuals to travel became much more accessible and on a much larger scale than ever before.

[44] See Keohane and Kuhling (2002; 2007) and Corcoran and Peillon (2003; 2006) for a discussion of this tension in Irish culture and the emergence of Celtic Tiger society.

and building up again, deconstruction and attempted reconstitution, arising from certain incapacities or perturbations in established systems of thought and action' (159) can be applied to new interpretations of a Celtic Tiger and post-Tiger Ireland. Through this accelerated restructuring, understandings of time, place and identity have been reconceptualised (O'Carroll, 2008; Wajeman; 2008; Levine, 2005; Keohane and Kuhling, 2003). This can be observed in the emergence of a new social and visual world in Ireland, in the blurring of public and private spaces and is embodied in the landscape of contemporary Irish pub culture.

Soja argues that this postmodern trend, which he refers to as the 'restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes,' is produced by the 'dynamics of capitalist development' (2003: 58). Indeed, Sarup (1996) suggests that modernity itself 'may be interpreted as a response to a crisis in the experience of time and space' (95). Sociologist Georg Simmel believed more than a century ago that space acts as a 'framework' for social relations and argued that the significance of place was waning as 'social organisation becomes detached from space' (in Urry, 1995: 5). As a result, the relationship of identity construction and social geography is relevant to any discussion on space, place, third places and the emerging concept of new spaces.

The fragmentation of Irish community, both conceptually and physically has resulted in a weakened connection to place. Dramatic geographical and infrastructural changes have occurred in Ireland through this process. Suburbanisation, the formation of satellite and dormitory communities, the prevalence of the automobile, changes in family life and the loss of communal space are features of a postmodern Ireland. As a result, the people/place relationship and the formation of identities has been altered and is characterised by social alienation and what Oldenburg refers to as the 'problem of place' (1999: 13). In particular, there has been a marked decrease in the use of public places and the manner in which communal space is utilised has been altered. Third places have been particularly affected and as community life fragments the Irish pub as a third

place is under threat. While the pub offers a temporary solution to the problem of place through its linking of community to new modes of Irishness, the pub as a site for the production and distribution of social capital is on decline. Similar to the tourist, the pub is increasingly used as a venue for the construction of the individual through the process of consumption, as opposed to a site of production for community networks and relationships. In many cases the pub has become a site of consumption and a contemporary landscape of leisure. The traditional use of the public house as a site of the everyday has become increasingly oriented towards individual and in-group preferences and choices and can be associated with what Lash and Urry (1994) describe as 'reflexive consumption' (57 – 59). Reflexive consumption involves the use of consumables and activities as signifiers in the production of identity and lifestyle. Consequently, the social function of the pub and the use of pub places is being transformed as spaces are developed as personalised sites of leisure and consumption.

With the increasing amount of time designated for leisure and consumption, landscapes have been also identified and developed to meet the needs of individuals and groups. According to Jameson, landscapes of leisure provide a means for the cultural exploration and use of fantasy and provide an 'optical illusion of social harmony' (1984: 141). Warren (1993) posits that the cultural use of fantasy through leisure spaces is intrinsically tied into the commodification of culture and capitalism (as these places lose their authenticity, as they become sites of consumerism). As discussed in chapters five and six, the cultural use of fantasy in leisure spaces by both tourists and residents in Ireland is increasingly related to the commodification of culture and advancement of globalised capitalism. The widespread touristic use of space and place in Ireland has established a framework for leisure that has been integrated into understandings of tradition and heritage. Domestic projections of fantasy upon leisure spaces typically coincide with the touristic need to consume idealised representations of culture and society.

Furthermore, while the production of the Irish pub in simulation of private

domestic space has been an ongoing development[45], the pub as a site of leisure is, in many cases, suggestive of a new middle-class domestic bliss complete with a close set of friends and various props of identity. The incursion of a private, domestic-like atmosphere into other public institutions has not been observed to the same extent. This chapter will explore the emerging trend to recreate the pub as a site of middle-class leisure and the blurring of public and private spaces.

While the pub represents a geography of the self that can be as, if not more, comfortably occupied than the home, domestic space is also increasingly seen as a location in which comfort, leisure and self-expression can take place.[46] The ability to modify and control domestic space with increasing disposable incomes and the availability of personalised technology has led the home to develop as a primary site of lifestyle and consumption. The private home, while historically constructed as a symbol of cultural identity and the identity of the self, has become a platform for individualism and an expression of lifestyle. Although certain areas of middle-class domestic space were designed to meet some of the leisure needs of the family, homes are now used to meet most or all leisure needs. The modification of the home spaces into tailored, individualised spaces are designed to include features that contribute to the identities of individuals and exclude factors that do not correlate to lifestyle preferences. New forms of technology facilitate the transformation of home spaces into controlled leisure environments that reflect individualised perceptions of identity and lifestyle.

It has been suggested that the emergence of the new domestic space in Ireland and the exclusivity of personalised environments encourage group polarisation and the abandonment of public places, resulting in a depletion of bridging networks, social capital, civic participation, and opportunities for spontaneity, novelty and exposure

[45] Bachelard suggests that 'all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home' (1994:5).

[46] The use of the domestic has also changed in tandem with transforming gender roles. While the home remains very much a workspace for many women, the home as workplace is less defined. Concurrently, women have also begun to use public spaces more frequently for leisure time.

to variety and difference.[47] Crucially, Oldenburg notes that 'the most important ... purpose or function served by informal public gathering places cannot be supplied by any other agencies in society' (1999: *ix*).

This chapter will further investigate the connection between place, space and identity within the context of the contemporary Irish public house. As individuals gain the freedom through consumption to formulate their own identities and use place to meet these needs, the social significance of everyday places decline in contemporary Ireland. I will discuss the ways in which the Irish third place has been altered and examine the social consequences as a significant habitat of meaning in Ireland weakens. This chapter will also explore the blurring of home space and third place as pubs increasingly employ cultural signifiers that refer to the middle-class domestic and as leisure extends into the home. The ways in which the home place is beginning to supersede the public domain, hugely impacting the social relevance of third places and the Irish pub in particular, will be examined.

Modern identities

Contemporary Ireland has become what Debord describes as the 'society of the spectacle' (1983) in which place is repudiated and replaced by a utilitarian approach to space. As a result, the need to generate individual identities becomes central to social consciousness and is definitively linked to the use of space and place. Contemporary Ireland, therefore, is characterised by a necessity for the individual to engage in the constant production of identity. Modernity, Foucault suggests, 'does not 'liberate man [sic] from his [sic] own being'; it compels him the task of producing himself' (1984: 202). Similarly, Kellner argues that postmodern identity is innately inauthentic and describes the 'artificiality of identity, that identity is constructed not given, that it is a matter of choice, style and behaviour rather than intrinsic moral or psychological qualities' (1992: 153). This was

[47] See Walker and Bellamy (2001) and Rosen (2004/Winter 2005). Hiss (1991) identifies these characteristics as significant to the success of a public place. Sunstein (2007), similar to Putnam (2000), suggests that the exposure to differing opinions is crucial for a healthy civic life.

illustrated by a number of informants who asserted that the pubs that they frequented were integral to their sense of self. One participant noted that the pub he attended was 'just me' (C25M). When questioned further, he concluded that the pub was 'just who I am.' The informant, as opposed to being a part of a place or a community, identified place as a functioning aspect of his own experience of identity. This indicates that his selection of the particular pub was based on individualised understandings of self and that he regarded the pub place as 'belonging' to him instead of a possessing a sense of belonging to place. This fits into a recognisable pattern of contemporary society where 'self-consciousness comes into its own; one engages in reflection on available social roles and possibilities and gains a distance from tradition' (Kellner, 1992: 141 – 142; Lash and Urry, 1994). Individuals apply multiple layers of meaning in which the depth of meaning is accessed based on the needs of that particular individual. As a result, the social significance of place had shifted and public and private spaces are increasingly used as extensions of the individual. Within this context, the pub has been transformed into an 'extension of the domain of the self' (Panofsky, 1998).

Kellner concedes that the postmodern individual is a production and he also argues that as the individual becomes more goal-oriented and strategic in the use of place, identities increasingly form independent of community:

> Postmodern identity, then, is constituted theatrically through role-playing and image construction. While the locus of modern identity revolved around one's occupation, one's function in the public sphere (or family), postmodern identity revolves around leisure, centred on looks, images, and consumption. (1992: 152 –153)

Niche social networks

Self-selected niche social networks have emerged in which individuals constantly engage in performative behaviours that affirm individual and group identities through a consistency in lifestyle choices. Place is transformed into a setting that hosts these various social networks and becomes conceptually aligned to the values and identities of the group. Pubs are ideally situated to respond to this modern

need. While many pubs can be described and categorised according to social status or class, lifestyle is becoming a primary way of understanding pub culture. Many themed pubs, for example, clearly appeal to particular niche social groups. However, most pubs can be labelled according to a generalised sense of place and identified as belonging to certain 'types' of people.

Research participants identified objects and ambience as significant to their individual and group identities. As previously noted, informants were also able to distinguish pubs within their communities based on an understood social category and locate themselves within that cultural context. Although the social boundaries are, in many cases, permeable, research participants report attending a particular pub or grouping of pubs based on their sense of self. This, in part, contributed to the outline of a pub typology that was presented in chapter two (see Appendix B).

A constructed sense of self generally remains consistent over a length of time, although some of those interviewed report attending a pub outside of their circle of regular pubs based on a change of 'mood.' Often this was temporary and they resumed attending their regular place after a single evening or sometimes returned to their pub place during the same outing. Respondents also reported permanent change in their regular pub as they themselves transformed. As the sense of self evolves, the relationship and sense of belonging to place changes accordingly.

As was the experience of the majority of the informants, socialising takes place within a group of friends. The formation of social groups is no longer based exclusively in and around community life but within self-selected in-groups. Older informants still reported traditional connections such as proximity (community) and family as being primary sources of social relations, but younger participants tended to belong to social networks made up of former school and college friends, work-mates and friends made through a shared interests (sports, dancing, drumming, gaming, etc.). Correspondingly, the continuous presence an intimate peer group in and around a particular pub was cited by many of the informants to be an essential

aspect of their private *and* public lives. These social groups are of particular importance to a number of the informants, many of whom regard friends as family members. This is particularly true of informants aged approximately 18 – 35, many of whom lived away from their immediate families. One person reports his pub attendance is linked to the constant presence of friends/family: 'all my friends are part of this [pub] space' (S22F). Another states, 'yeah, my friends are my life. I'm closer [to them] then my own family' (P27F).

Reflexive consumption

Celtic Tiger and post-Tiger Ireland is characterised by individualism where consumption has become less focused within an immediate locale and increasingly on lifestyle commodities within a globalised context (Hayes *et al.*, 2005). Under modernity, individuals seek to formulate and project a complete lifestyle, inclusive of leisure time, to which all aspects of life correspond. Individual attempts to construct identity through lifestyle have been met through the process of consumption. Ideologies of 'individual choice' and 'individual freedom' have emerged to provide the conceptual basis for the emergence of the consumer lifestyle, in which a radical conceptual reconstruction of objects, or consumables, has occurred on a global level of which Ireland is now a part. As a result, objects have developed meanings that have become specific signifiers for certain social members. Objects become saturated with cultural meaning and become recognisable as signs (i.e. status, worth, value, etc.) to in-group members. While this in all probability has always held true, cultural objects now exist almost exclusively in a capitalistic economy of which the value is now based on consumption. Individuals can construct identities through the reflexive consumption of signs and participation in the production of the self through 'lifestyle'. As a result, the formation and maintenance of identity has become increasingly fluid as individuals are dependent on lifestyle 'choices' to signify the self. As the consumption must be continuous in order to maintain the identity of the individual, new constructions can constantly be forged. Consumables, often

marketed as specific lifestyle signifiers, are common tools for the projection of personal identity within the public sphere. The pub, while maintaining its status as a third place, has become a site of consumption and location for the projection of lifestyle:

> There has been a cultural shift from active and communal forms of leisure to more passive and individualised forms.... *Pubs are expressive of lifestyle and identities*. Sociologically the shift from observing what people do to attempting to understand the meanings that they attribute to their actions has been significant. *Consumption is a symbolic as well as material activity.* (Watson, 2002: 212) (emphasis added)

Like the tourist, the pint, along with many other products of consumption now available in pubs, function as mechanisms for contemporary identity construction:

> So, when an individual enters a drink or a meal, they are also purchasing an experience or ambience, which is associated with desire, and the creation and expression of identity and lifestyle. What is important is not so much the actual products that are consumed but the meanings attached to those products. (Watson, 2002: 207)

Significantly, the space of the pub has also become part of the consumable 'package' through the commodification process (Slater, 2000):

> pubs have ambiences and customers are consuming more than the product on sale. They are places where people can create and recreate social identities. There are Irish pubs and Australian pubs, young pubs and gay pubs, pubs for professional men and women, pubs with a whole mix of ages and social groups, pub that welcome families and pubs that do not. (Watson, 2002: 209)

Through its central role in Irish public life, the pub as a third place acts as an identity continuum as it 'has become a mirror image of home, a home from home *in a different sense, expressive of certain lifestyles and values*' (Watson, 2002: 209) (emphasis added).

In response to this unique form of Celtic Tiger individualism, social scientists (Corcoran and Peillon, 2003, 2006; Kirby, Gibbons and Cronin, 2002) have suggested that the accelerated modernisation of Irish society has led to community without propinquity and increasing personal and cultural insecurity. Corcoran

articulates the unease that is particular to contemporary Ireland in relation to the past, present and future in relation to space and place and argues that 'contemporary capitalist economics gives rise to high levels of unpredictability and uncertainty in social life and cultural relations' (2003: 4).[48] Similarly, Keohane and Kuhling note the:

> experience of living in modern Ireland [is a] time of heady change and disorientation, and also inertia and feeling powerless, a paradoxical condition of accelerated modernisation and stasis. (2006: 37)

They further speculate that the conditions resulting from the rapid modernisation of the Celtic Tiger include depression and melancholy and note that 'anxiety and binge drinking are epidemic' (*ibid*). While the construction of self is a contemporary activity that provides liberty and choice for the individual, Keller suggests that the modern experience of transforming personal and group identities result in collective suffering:

> For one is never certain that one has made the right choice, that one has chosen one's 'true' identity, or even constituted nature of identity and that one can always change and modify one's identity at will. One is also anxious concerning recognition and validation of one's identity by others. Further, modernity also involves a process of innovation, of constant turnover and novelty. Modernity signifies the destruction of past forms of life, values, and identities.... One's identity may become out of date, or superfluous, or no longer socially validated. One may thus experience anomie, a condition of extreme alienation in which one is no longer at home in a world. (2002: 142)

This insecurity, it can be argued, has also contributed to a transformation of identities, particularly that of the individual. Indeed, a feature of postmodern societies is that conceptualisations of identity become confused, fragmented, melancholic and unfixed. In support of this hypothesis, a sort of ambiguous, widespread social malaise was identified by many respondents as the primary cause of current drinking issues such as bingeing, underage drinking, female alcoholics, drink driving and street violence. Although many of the respondents conceded that

[48] See Blazer (2005), *The Age of Melancholy: Major Depression and Its Social Origins,* Lyon (1994), Gergen (1991), Giddens (1990) and Flax (1990) for further discussions on social distance and anxiety within a postmodern society. See Geertz (1973) for what he describes as 'the gravest sort of anxiety' in *The Interpretations of Culture*.

life has significantly improved from economic advances in the past decade, they also indicate a general belief that society appears increasingly unhappy and less satisfied with life:

> I think just to forget about everything that's happening in their lives. You know this weekend drinking ... it's very manic. I think that people are so stressed and so hyper and even unhappy that I think it's a bit manic. (M36F)

> People don't know what to do with themselves anymore ... you know? Especially the young people but also the young working people in their 20s and 30s like. We have everything we want now but we don't have the time or the enjoyment for ... things. I think there's that immaturity in a lot of things that Irish do. Maybe it has to do with the new independence and we're losing the run of ourselves. (D40M)

> I don't like [binge drinking] because I think it's a reaction to something and I don't think it's a healthy one. People don't know what else to do with themselves; people just don't know what to do. I think a lot of people feel alienated in society. I think it's a ritual [to drink] and it's come to replace something else. Ireland's traditions have gone out the window and I think people are trying to create something, a sense of belonging maybe, things like raves. (B26M)

Place and (false) nostalgia

The multiplicity of choice and the subsequent effort required to construct and maintain identity result in the further relegation of the self into social niches and increasing levels of disconnection. Consequently, a cultural nostalgia ensues as individuals experience a changing environment that threatens individual, social, and national identity. Sentimentality for a perceived past, whether authentic or imagined, is produced in the attempt to locate self and create emotional links to time, space and place in an unstable social geography. Ireland, a country saturated in images conducive to drawing tourists[49] has been particularly prone to nostalgic understandings of history, culture and the self. While the development of tourism in Ireland has acted as a catalyst for the commodification and re-invention of Irish cultural geography, conceptualisations of national identity have recently been

challenged through dramatic economic and social changes and the emergence of a new middle and upper class. Irish society could be viewed as simultaneously embracing and rejecting previously formed signifiers of Irish identity. Even the consumption of particular brands of alcohol can be indicative of this change. For example, an increasing number of 'traditional' Irish pubs in rural parts of the North West now offer a variety of drinks that would not be typically associated with that context, such as a variety of cocktails and foreign beers, and Guinness sales have been consistently declining over the past decade. This inconsistency, consequently, can lead the individual to develop a:

> preoccupation with identity, with personal and collective roots.... It could be said that the impulse to preserve the past is part of the impulse to preserve the self. Perhaps people try and retain their sense of identity by maintaining their links with the past? Without knowing where they have been, it is difficult to know where they are going. The past is the foundation of the individual and collective identity; objects from the past are the source of significance as cultural symbols. The nostalgic impulse is an important agency in adjustment to crisis; it is the social emollient and reinforces (national) identity when confidence is weakened or threatened. (Sarup, 1994: 97)

Increasingly, nostalgia for an invented reality emerges, meeting the needs of both tourists and locals. The Irish pub has become an ideal location to experience a false nostalgia. False nostalgia is characterised by a sentimental reaction in individuals who have had no personal experience with the signifier of the past. In many pubs, a sense of time is continuously recreated through the visuality of place, creating a meaningful but individualised experience that provides a conduit for individual connections to an invented past. However, a degree of subversion towards representations of contemporary Irishness could also be found. Some participants were aware of, amused and/or annoyed by representations of Irishness in Ireland and abroad and found some pub installations to be overly artificial. This appeared to exist on a spectrum and in those locations where I was conducting fieldwork and I would often discuss the topic of authenticity with a number of informants.

[49] As discussed in the previous chapter, the diaspora tourist has been the primary focus of the heritage industry in Ireland, resulting in particular representations of Ireland being projected, of which pub culture is a principle target.

Uniquely, Celtic Tiger Ireland has allowed the condition of modernity to transcend conceptualisations of the past as remains of pre-modern traditions coexist and mingle in the same spaces. Consequently, an interesting amalgam of time, space and place has occurred in the Irish social geography. Jenks (1998), a writer on postmodern architecture, suggests that modern individuals possess a sort of cognitive *musée imaginarie* which consists of an amalgam of popular culture, mass media and the experiences of other people in other places that becomes contemporarily integrated within our own histories. Contemporary Ireland is a place where the 'past, repressed, returns and intrudes into the present, forming the future' (Keohane and Kuhling, 2006: 39) through both nostalgic understandings of history and place and the advent of the postmodern experience of the self. Whelan observes:

> On one hand, Irish people have been urged to turn their backs on the atavism of the past ... in its place, they are urged to accept a more 'modern' user-friendly European vision.... The radical opposition between these two stances is not alone resolved, but unacknowledged in some commentaries, perhaps because it is unresolveable, except in some po-mo pastiche, a Benetton-style mix n' match where the Irish past becomes merely an up-market junk shop, where 'the kitsch lumber of Irish history' might be retailed. (1992: 16)

This, Whelan suggests, can be observed in the 'privatisation of history, the denial of any valid communal sense of the past, ... the privatisation of landscape' (*ibid*) and summarily through the individualisation and commodification of the social geography. The material culture of the contemporary Irish pub effectively illustrates this phenomenon in the commonplace blending of old and new signs of Irish identity. Signifiers of a national Irish identity are undergoing a process of abandonment, reconstruction and/or collision. An institution from the past and of the present, the pub is now a place where 'diverse forms of life collide and grate against one another, and fuse into hybrid forms that are sometimes grotesque, sometimes marvellous, usually confusing and bewildering' (Keohane & Kuhling, 2004: 39). Perhaps a more obvious example of this phenomenon could be found in a trendy bar and night club in central Sligo Town, where a small black antique-style stove sat randomly by the front doors of what could only be described as a contemporarily designed bar. Having changed themes and names several times

over, the pub has now closed.

Many Irish pubs have undergone dramatic remodelling, re-naming and have been 'themed' while a significant number of community-based pubs have been forced out of business. Often these pubs have failed to remodel, reinvent or theme or have done so unsuccessfully. Also, alcohol consumption has rapidly increased within the past ten years in Ireland; however, the act of drinking has become the primary focus of individuals as opposed to an aspect of community participation. While the rural rounds system could certainly be described as a gluttonous consumption of alcohol, it is clear from those interviewed that the purpose of this activity (whether enjoyed or not) was to become intoxicated within a group of inter-related people, demonstrate a sense of camaraderie and become linked to place. Binge drinking takes place not so much in the organised and reciprocal rounds system traditionally found in rural pubs, but is characterised by an accelerated and frenzied consumption in a variety of locations, often outside of the pub. Younger informants (18 – 25, see Appendix D) described a system of drinking that involved consuming cheap cans of beer at home with a group of friends, moving to the pub to drink with a wider network of friends and acquaintances, moving on to the late-night pub or club and finally, returning home to consume more alcohol. This contemporary behaviour can be understood through Baudrillard's interpretation of the modern condition, in which individuals will:

> deliberately submit themselves to extreme conditions.... All risk situations, which were once man's [sic] natural lot, are today re-created artificially in a form of nostalgia for extremes, survival and death ... [this includes] drugs and other forms of mind-bending – anything goes in the attempt to achieve this violent deconstruction of the body and thought. (2001: 49 – 51)

In the case of alcohol consumption, the pub is becoming less significant as the act of consumption has superseded the importance of place. The public discourse surrounding the closing of pubs around the country, particularly rural pubs, is often attributed to a number of recently developed social and legal changes. Research participants also tend to attribute this trend to the increasing price of the pint, the smoking ban and recent Garda and government initiatives to curb drink driving.

However, in a rapidly changing society where the significance of place is fading, the pub is no longer significant in lives of many individuals beyond the provision of a venue for identity construction. I believe that as the relevance of place become more personalised for individual preferences and lifestyle, the importance of public places and the third place in particular is on the decline. Once the primary activities and behaviours used to construct and project identity are no longer restricted to the place of the pub, attendance wanes as individuals engage in these activities elsewhere, usually the private home. Younger informants in particular describe less interest in the experience of pub attendance than in the consumption of alcohol. As previously noted participants report higher levels of drinking in the home and the home consumption of quantities of alcohol prior to attending the pub. The activity of drinking is developing into a more individualistic activity and utilised as an expression of personal identity, with a decline in the collective experience of drinking and an increase in alcohol consumption in the exclusivity of social niches:

> Like in the 80s no one had any money so you would just go to the pub and nurse your pint for like, three hours [laughs]! It would be bad form for a bar man to take a glass off you if there was even a drop left in it. Now there's less talking and more drinking. (A52M)

As articulated by this informant, participation in community life and the production of social capital are no longer the primary goals of pub attendance. Commodification and consumption have developed as ways in which identity can be constructed and contribute to the identity formation of niche social groups. Sarup suggests that the 'coercive laws of competition' found under capitalism lead to a 'perpetual flux in consumer wants, tastes and needs ... [resulting in] a permanent locus of uncertainty and struggle' (1994: 98 - 99). Consuming becomes a primary means of self-expression, identity formation and social belonging:

> Individuals are induced to buy not a single commodity but an entire system of objects and needs through which one differentiates oneself socially, yet integrates oneself into the consumer society. (Sarup, 1994: 107)

As consumerism becomes the primary means of self-expression, the activity of consumption becomes necessary to indicate social existence:

> Consumerism requires a vast labour to learn about the products, to master their use and to earn the money and leisure to purchase and use them. Consumption is thus a productive behaviour which signifies that one is a member of this society. The consumer cannot avoid the obligation to consume, because it is consumption that is the primary mode of social integration and the primary ethic and activity within the consumer society.... In the consumer society, *consumption ... is a mode of being, a way of gaining identity, meaning and prestige in the contemporary society*. (Sarup, 1994: 107) (emphasis added)

Baudrillard argues that in new forms of capitalism 'the fundamental role of signs and images in a postmodernist world' is superseding the commodity itself (in Sarup, 1994: 106). The shift from commodification/consumption to the consumption of a system of signs fulfils the identification needs of various social niches. This development dramatically alters the use of space and place. Pubs become identified as one component within a system of prescribed lifestyle signifiers. Not only does this limit the possibility for spontaneous social interaction due to the exclusivity of social niches, but it also reduces opportunity for the formation of dynamic bridging networks. The pub becomes limited to temporary interpretations of lifestyle significance to social niches, resulting in the destabilisation of the role of the pub as a third place. As mentioned previously, the erosion of the Irish third place has also led to the almost constant refurbishing and reinventing of pubs throughout towns, villages and rural areas in attempts to maintain relevance in the lives of individuals and groups.

Within a self-imposed system of commodification and consumption, self-branding becomes a useful method for signifying identity and membership. Atkins, a multi-national marketing strategist, suggests that the formation of the contemporary identity of individuals are increasingly defined by allegiance to brands:

> as our society becomes more consumerist, so are the ways that we make meaning and create identity. We might originally, years and years ago, have created a sense of identity through nationhood or through belonging to a particular church. Nowadays, it can be made through what brand you're particularly committed to. (*The Persuaders*: 2004)

Atkins believes that branding appeases the individual's need to experience community and applies this approach to his work as a corporate consultant in the creation of brand communities. Notably, he asserts that 'loyalty comes from a sense of community, a sense of belonging and a sense of buying into something - a worldview in which [consumers] believe' (*The Persuaders*: 2004).[50] The extent to which this occurs can be observed in the level of awareness concerning the extent of consumerism and the power of advertising. The majority of informants could discern the intended target of advertising campaigns and analyse the marketing tactic of affiliating products to lifestyles:

> Well I suppose the most powerful lobby is the drinks industry – is Guinness. It's sponsoring every sports event and every music festival and things like that. We are all happy with their sponsoring but it's kinda' like their presence is everywhere, their advertising is everywhere. We're promoting it. (D39F)

> I think young people today are being buffeted around with these marketing forces. Because that's what tradition has been replaced by, these marketing forces that want their money. And alcohol is a way to give in to that, escapism and at the same time spending your money. (B26M)

However, despite this depth of understanding a number of interviewees reported that their brand allegiance is an essential component to their own sense of identity by noting, for example, 'I'm a Guinness man' (A52M).

Discourses of modernity, the formation of new identities and the 'restless formation and reformation' of place (Soja, 2003: 58) has led to new uses of the pub and changes in the people/place relationship. Places are increasingly implicated in the self-branding process in which a conceptual correlation is formed between the visuality and imposed meaning of place, the formative processes of place and lifestyle construction. The feature of the pub place to act as a 'home from home'

[50] Atkins argues that the 'brand consumer is looking to brands to give a sense of fulfilment that society and religions used to offer. They want brands to take stands on things. Brands have values. Brands have points of view. Brands have personalities. Brands are whole societies in which they participate. If you don't have those things, then you're likely to fail, or at least not to be as profitable as you could be' (*The Persuaders*: 2004).

has made it an ideal site to comfortably engage in the processes of lifestyle and pubs are becoming for many an extension of the self and a venue for consumption.

The pub as a second home

As discussed in the preceding chapters, an important feature of the third place is it is comfortable and familiar 'like home,' yet largely absent of the pressures of the domestic. Individuals often felt 'at home' in a genuine third place because they enjoyed greater freedom from self-surveillance and the surveillance of others - the boss, the family and from the social roles that they may be restricted to in the domestic or work places. Hiss remarks that a sense of place can be identified by the individual experience of comfort and aesthetic appeal, 'whether it provides richness of information reaching all the senses, and whether there is an absence of alarm signals' (1999: 28). A sense of ease, comfort and familiarity is what one informant identified as an important aspect of his local:

> Probably the capacity to just innocently walk in and be in someone's company and be able to engage. If that's easier done in a pub and that's a pub that ease of access of people then I would prefer it. Take Fiddler's for example, you go in there and unless there's something about the place, unless you walk up to somebody and engage them it doesn't naturally happen. It's probably to do with the clientele as well as much as the physical aspects of it. (J46M)

This particular pub in Sligo town was mentioned in several interviews, primarily because of its use of surveillance cameras and bouncers. These features were identified as restrictive and prohibitive to the freedoms usually enjoyed in third places, resulting in a sense of space that is 'unfriendly,' 'uncomfortable,' 'unwelcoming' and private. In contrast, another informant described how domestic behaviour was a normal aspect of her pub attendance while in college:

> we used to go to the pub at the college and watch 'Friends', because myself and David didn't have a television for a while there and we used to go in there and then we just go into the habit of it, it was a real social thing, cause like half of the college was there to watch it and everyone was there waiting for it to turn on and it was great. You were just watching all these people and it was a great atmosphere.... I would rather watch them in a pub because the atmosphere is better than at home. (T30F)

For this individual, watching television, a domestic activity, was actually improved by the 'atmosphere' of the third place.

Interviewees often described 'their' third place as 'like home' or 'homey,' 'comfortable,' 'cosy' and 'relaxed.' One informant notes how the smoking ban had allowed her and her partner to return to the preferred 'cosier' pubs:

> Especially since the smoking ban, like you know.... The reason we liked it [the super pub] then is because years ago it was so open, and with David and the asthma it meant that he didn't get asthma [in there]. I really like small little pokey pubs ... but the smoke would be a problem, and Sinead's would be like that. [It's] the kind that's really small and dark and it has great indie music in it and you can get a great pint in it, so that would be another pub we go to now pretty regularly. (M36F)

Berleant describes the sense of belonging and intimacy that develops between individuals and place when he recognises his own sense of satisfaction in place. He notes, 'I shall *feel at home* in the setting – my aims are not thwarted or belittled, but enhanced and furthered' (1997: 2). This feature occurs organically and over time as a sense of place is formed and a third place emerges. An atmosphere of comfort and familiarity is reflected in the evolving use of space in which artefacts from the locality are gradually introduced into the décor. The visuality of the pub often appears accumulative and contextualised within the local. Attempts to 'create' third places in semi-public places such as cafés, pubs or bookshops tend to replicate this visuality.

Similar to the development of domestic space by its inhabitants, third place regulars often participate in this process and individuals can become a part of the interior. Many third place pubs would regularly receive and display postcards and photos from their locals while travelling, serving as a reminder of their connection to place and community during their absence. While some pubs have been refurbished and redecorated many times over, features of the locale often begin to accumulate and integrate into the newness until the space is transformed back into a site of

complete comfort. One informant remarked on his attachment to the familiarity and meaning of this gradual shaping of place:

> They did it up years ago and they painted over what I consider the life of the place – new paint smell and everything. You didn't feel comfortable for about six months, and then it started to get just like it was before, except not so filthy [laughs]. I guess they have to do it from time to time [refurbish] but you get used to it being the way it is. (B60M)

While the feminisation of the public house saw the introduction of domestic artefacts (soft furnishings, carpeting, pre-recorded music, etc.) and many pubs resemble domestic space in a number of ways, contemporary pub décor largely reflects the specific lifestyle needs of the clientele. The presence of the modern domestic in the Irish third place has become widespread as pubs install state-of-the-art plasma television sets, DVD players, satellite TV, provide sofas and armchairs, coffee tables, artwork, magazines and newspapers, serve freshly cooked food and a selection of non-alcoholic beverages, creating for some a setting similitude to the ideal home place (see *figures 26 – 29*). Yet, in many of these pubs a number of informants felt neither 'at home' or like a member of a third place. These informants described this sensation as feeling 'not comfortable' and 'like you can't relax.' Several informants noted that on the occasional visits to these pub types the felt like they were a guest 'visiting a nice house' and had to behave accordingly (M30F). Interviews suggest that many individuals preferred the old domestic style to that of the new, and that new visual trends in pub design were 'neutral,' 'bland' and simply 'don't seem Irish' (T65F). Of those that did enjoy the 'new' domesticity of the pub, attendance was typically intermittent and observations found that the presence of regulars in these places were less common.

Parallel to these developments in the public house, society has integrated leisure into domestic space that now includes an area marked for entertaining (many households now possess 'home entertainment systems' complete with wide screen televisions, DVD players, stereo systems and mini-bars). The consumption of alcohol in the home, a practice that was traditionally frowned upon in Irish society,

has now become commonplace (Foley, 2004). The ambiguity between domestic and leisure space has led to a blurring of the home and the pub in particular:

> What were once treated as separate, self-contained places within which one could escape from the rigours of daily life now are seen as not so much segregated sites but modes of representation that permeate virtually all landscapes and hence are inseparable from daily life. (Warren, 1993: 173)

Figs. 26 – 29 The domesticated pub.

Some informants expressed frustration at the intrusion of the domestic and the continuous presence of the television in some pubs was identified as being of particular nuisance. In one interview the informant stated, 'Jesus, I can stay home and watch the telly' (D40M), while another noted:

> The television's on too loud an awful lot. It just takes the focus from everybody. My brother was over, I hadn't seen him in six years and the four of us went out, the four brothers, so we would have a chat, you know ... but it wasn't like 'let's all go out and have a drink' but it was an opportunity to chat or whatever ... but the Simpsons came on [laughing] and all the sudden everybody's just looking at the fucking Simpsons. You know what I mean? It really sucks you in. (J41M)

Although superficially it might appear to be a continuation of the trend to decorate pubs to feel 'like home,' the newer designs reflect an increasing distance between place and patron. Moving away from the custom of creating space that is intended for comfort and relaxation, the new forms of leisure experienced in the pub tend to be designed to indicate ambience of a particular lifestyle. One informant noted that the domesticity of the interior is what appeals to her:

> The space is really nice and there's a lot of windows there so it's open, not crowded or busy. I like the places that have this modern feel to it – not the old lacy curtains and dark windows and smoke. You would love it.... It's nicer than me own home [laughs]. (A36F)

The transgression of the private into the public could have social consequences by, for example, reducing opportunities for communication and participation in social networks, thus diminishing the significance of the third place:

> most pubs have incorporated some features of the home, pre-eminently the television set. And middle-class houses have incorporated some features of the pub, especially the corner bar and the pool table. This erosion of the boundary between home and pub threatens to make the pub no longer a special privileged place, where antisocial behaviour is sanctioned. (Fiske, 1987: 10)

The increasing visual reference to the middle-class home place alludes to the use of fantasy in the pub as a site of leisure. Additionally, with pub refurbishment and redesign so common, the interior design of pubs (like the private home) is becoming increasingly homogenised. Conforming to recent trends to domestic

design, the pub industry has moved away from the feminised 'homey' or masculinised utilitarian interiors to incorporate signs of modernity and middle-class wealth. Like the remodelled Donegal pub described in the beginning of the thesis, these pubs are characterised by open, neutral spaces. The instalment of marble bars, leather sofas, artwork, hard wood or stone floors and chrome or wrought iron fixtures has led to what some informants have referred to as the 'trendy,' 'modern,' 'hip,' or as one interview notes, the 'yuppification' of the pub (J36M). Fiske argues that the décor of the modern pub is suggestive of class values, and notes:

> In practice, and increasingly as the pub is literally renovated, there are features of pubs that express a relationship of affinity not in opposition between home and pub.... They can be ranged along a continuum of closeness to or distance from the family lounge -- better or worse décor, greater or less comfort – and the less austere and drab they are, the weaker the critique they express of the bourgeois home ... (1987: 10)

'The house as symbol of the self'[51]

The visuality of the Irish pub is changing in tandem with the domestic home, and more specifically, the living area of the individual. Like the living room in the home, the space of the pub demonstrates 'a strong correlation between the style selected and the consumer' (Cooper, 1974: 136). Home places have evolved to signify the identity of the self while public places and the third place in particular situates the individual within the community and reinforces collective identity. However, the Celtic Tiger has been characterised by a rapid growth in suburbanisation, automobile use, housing development, travel and social and physical movement. While there has been a growth in population, there has also, as previously noted, been an increase in social distance, a decrease in continuity in community make-up and as noted, increasing signs of alienation.[52] As well, the suburbanisation of the Irish countryside impacts the ability, desire and motivation of individuals to participate in community social life. Distance and the necessity of

[51] As described by Clare Cooper (1974) in her article of the same title.

[52] While the concept of alienation cannot be measured, signifiers of alienation can be identified and quantified. For example, drug and alcohol use have significantly increased in the past 15 years, as have suicide, self-harm and depression. See Keohane and Kuhling (2007), 'Depression: the melancholy spirit of the Celtic Tiger,' pp. 107 – 150 for a further discussion of this topic.

driving to sites of leisure encourage individuals to modify their living spaces in order to entertain while remaining in the home. For many informants, the greater the inconvenience to the pub in terms of transport and distance, the less likely they are to attend regularly and the more likely they are to use the home for leisure time:

> when I worked in town the pub was just across the road and sometimes I would just go over after work and meet someone, but very rarely now ... where I am now, it's in a suburb and very rarely [would I go to the pub after work], it wouldn't happen. (D23M)

> [The pub] is just too far away and with the Garda check points you'd be afraid of having one or two drinks and having your license taken off you.... Sometimes I go out but now it just seems like too much hassle and now you can get a DVD and a bottle of wine and have a nice night in just as well. (D39F)

> It's easier to stay home. I like being in the pub or going clubbing when I'm actually out, but to get there is another story. It's hard to be motivated ... [going to the pub] takes so much effort. You have to organise the driving or deal with the taxi because there are no buses out here like, and then how're you gonna get back in the next day for the car? And the euros you end up spending. It's hardly easy going out. (W34F)

As expressed by these informants, the absence of community participation in the everyday intensifies the focus on the individual and the importance of the home place grows in significance. As a result, the home becomes the primary location to construct and project identities of the self and 'the personal space bubble which we carry with us and which is an almost tangible extension of our self expands to embrace the house we have designated as ours' (Cooper, 1974: 131). The house is used to define the individual and the individual informs the use of the house. Cooper suggests that as we 'lay claim to ... this little niche in the world, we project something of ourselves onto its physical fabric' (1974: 141).

Ownership of property and particularly the home has become a modern symbol of identity and status, as is evidenced in the vast number of print and television media dedicated to the domestic interior and exterior and numerous conversations over the course of this research based within the pub. I learned to become fluent in this

seemingly popular theme, covering everything from housing prices, stamp duty, the housing bubble, interior design, etc., simply so I wouldn't be left out of conversations.

The growing popularity of 'shelter-lit' – printed media dedicated to domestic design and decoration – also reflects the trend towards the consumption of the domestic and the attempts to use home places as a venue for the construction of the individual. Cooper comments that perhaps the:

> rise in popularity of the profession of interior decorating [as well as the shelter-lit phenomenon] is in some way related to people's inability to make these decisions for themselves since they're not sure what their self really is. (1974: 134)

The blurring between home place and third place in Ireland has led to a movement into the domestic for a variety of reasons. Socialising in the home can overcome a number of practical difficulties that individuals who live further than walking distance from their preferred public site of leisure might experience, such as transportation, childcare or drink driving issues. Moreover, leisure in the home is typically less expensive and, as several informants commented, with the recent purchase of a home they could no longer afford (or no longer desired) socialising in the pub:

> To pay the mortgage we really can't do much else. Sometimes we get a bit of extra and we can go out [but] most weekends we stay here and have a few people over. Sure we're all the same. (N54M)

> I've got this nice lovely house ... why would I want to be leaving it all the time? It's just the way I like it here [and] I can have some wine and a nice meal and not spend a thing. (D44F)

In addition to the economics of going out, the second informant also highlighted how home leisure appeals as personal preferences can be facilitated. The home place not only offers an opportunity to selectively avoid any unwanted social or cultural experience, but can also function as a primary site to engage in unrestricted individualism. The domestic interior takes on a form of what Rosen (2005) terms

as 'ego-casting',[53] in which the environment is tailored to reflect the identity of the individual. Through this process, individuals and groups can adapt their environments to more accurately reflect lifestyle through the selective filtration of culture:

> we have moved beyond narrowcasting into 'egocasting' - a world where we exercise an unparalleled degree of control over what we watch and what we hear. We can consciously avoid ideas, sounds, and images that we don't agree with or don't enjoy. (Rosen, 2005: 13)

In the home place, music can be strategically selected to reflect the mood of the participants; the television can be turned on to the show, match or movie of choice or turned off; smoking can take place and the consumption of alcohol occurs in the manner that is deemed appropriate for the social situation. Technology, such as personal computers, digital TV, DVD players and mobile phones have been developed to personalise individual environments and to consume culture in the comfort of home. Technology facilitates meeting individual wants on demand and promotes what Rosen terms a 'sampling approach' towards the consumption of environment and leisure in which the home place provides an ideal setting (2005: 12). Rosen suggests that society has 'created and embraced technologies that enable us to make a fetish of our preferences' (2005: 1). In her exploration of the effects of the iPod on the individual, she notes:

> You can listen to an entire Mahler symphony straight through; but you can also enjoy Bach, the Buena Vista Social Club, and the memoirs of a Buddhist acolyte in one sitting. A touch of Verdi and Strauss can be followed by a healthy dose of Eminem and Kelis. It's all up to you. [Personalised techology, such as the] iPod offers us an unprecedented level of control over what we want to experience, and this is the feature of the technology most often discussed and praised. But the iPod, like the Walkman, can be leveling or narrowing as well as freeing. It erodes our patience for a more challenging form of listening. The first time a person sits through an opera, patience is tested; they might wonder whether hour after hour of *Die Meistersinger* is really worth it. But with experience and patience comes considerable reward—the disciplined listener eventually achieves a different understanding of the music, when heard as its composer intended. Listening to 'Mahler's Greatest Hits' is not the same thing. Sampling is the opposite of savoring. (Rosen, 2005: 1)

[53] See Rosen (2002) for an in-depth discussion on the concept of ego-casting, which she describes as the 'thoroughly personalized and extremely narrow pursuit of one's personal tastes' (52). A similar discussion can be found Sunstein's (2007) chapter (1) on 'The Daily Me.'

The use of personalised technology in the home can also lead individuals to *expect* immediate satisfaction in their leisure experiences. The constant catering to the self erodes the desire to exert effort to experience the new or unknown. Live music, for example, involves degrees of patience, effort and a willingness to be surprised. The music may be pleasant, or not, or it may differ from previous performances. The experience of live music also demands, on some level, that one actively listens:

> Yeah, I'm just not going out to hear music as much as I used to. I used to be going all the time, every week almost! The sessions were fab and it was part of my routine. But a lot of the music is gone and things have changed. It's like no one pays attention anymore and everyone is talking the whole time and it's just not enjoyable. (S46M)

Cass Sunstein (2007) suggests that the use of personal technologies promote separateness. The employment of individualised technologies to create an ideal site of leisure in the home, it could be argued, further intensifies detachment from community networks. Sunstein notes, as the 'customization of our communications universe increases, society is in danger of fragmenting, shared communities [are] in danger of dissolving' (in Anderson, 2006: 189). Technology that assists us in filtering out culture and social interaction that are not perceived as correlating to a desired lifestyle also reduce the potential for novelty in the everyday. Sociologists Walker and Bellamy (2001) verify that 'media audiences are seen as frequently selecting material that confirms their beliefs, values, and attitudes, while rejecting media content that conflicts with these cognitions' (9). As discussed in chapter one, novelty and surprise are essential ingredients in a properly functioning public space and important features of the third place, as one informant confirmed:

> I really love those wee pubs. You're walking down the street and it's one world and then you walk in and it's a completely different world with all the dark places. And even when you're not going in you know something could be going on in there and you wish you could have the time. (M33F)

However, the desire to filter and create personalised environments avoids the possibility of entering into, as this informant described, 'a completely different world.' The Irish pub, while encompassing this characteristic, is increasingly

avoided by individuals or modified to meet the lifestyle needs of individuals and groups to the point of vacuity.

The act of filtering and avoidance is having, as both Putnam (2000) and Oldenburg (1999) argue, a negative effect on social discourse and civic participation. In his compelling argument, Sunstein asserts that '[p]eople should be exposed to materials that they would not have chosen in advance,' and notes that '[u]nplanned, unanticipated encounters are central to democracy itself' (2007: 5). The use of personalised technology assists the individual to filter her or his own lifeworld, but when used in a public setting, personalised technology, particularly the mobile phone, also acts to distract and disconnect individuals from social engagement and leads to what Gergen (2005) refers to as 'absent presences' (see *figure 30*).

Fig. 30 Absent presences.

Rosen believes that with this indulgence of the self through selective consumption and social absences, society is in danger of the fetishisation of the self:

> In the process we are encouraging the flourishing of some of our less attractive human tendencies: for passive spectacle; for constant, escapist fantasy; for excesses of consumption. These impulses are age-old, of course, but they are now fantastically easy to satisfy.... From the remote control to the ... iPod, we have crafted technologies that are superbly capable of giving us what we want. Our pleasure at exercising control over what we hear, what we see, and what we read is not intrinsically dangerous. But an unwillingness to recognize the potential excesses of this power - egocasting, fetishisation[54], a vast cultural

[54] Rosen further suggests that the fetishisation of the ego may produce long-term consequences 'on literacy, engaged political debate, the appreciation of art, thoughtful criticism and taste-formation is

impatience, and the triumph of individual choice over all critical standards - is perilous indeed. (2002: 16 - 17)

Conclusion

As discussed in chapter one, place contributes to the construction of the self, informs who we are and what we will become and provides a sense of belonging and commitment. Public places act as repositories for shared memories, community experiences and supply a framework for understanding the surrounding world. Third places are 'habitats of meaning' (Hannerz, 1996) through the provision of familiar, semi-public points that act as 'homes away from home.'

Oldenburg has recognised a number of characteristics by which to identify third places including informality, inclusiveness, locality, novelty and mystery, diversity, comfort, low profile and an integral part of everyday life. Oldenburg believes that third places are increasingly under threat, while Putnam warns that many of the features of contemporary culture are leading to the decline of social capital, impoverishing the lives of individuals, communities and society. Situated in the everyday, the pub provides individuals and communities with opportunities to casually participate in the construction and maintenance of social networks, although current trends in the industry are curtailing this feature.

The rapid economic and social changes of Celtic Tiger Ireland have led to new relationships to space and place and have accelerated the development of a globalised and postmodern society. The formation of identities, no longer grounded in the intimacy of the locale, are becoming increasingly individualised and reliant on spaces and places outside of community. Furthermore, postmodern

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difficult to discern. But it is worth exploring how the most powerful of these technologies have already succeeded in changing our habits and our pursuits. By giving us the illusion of perfect control, these technologies risk making us incapable of ever being surprised. They encourage not the cultivation of taste, but the numbing repetition of fetish. And they contribute to … "egocasting," the thoroughly personalised and extremely narrow pursuit of one's personal taste. In thrall to our own little technologically constructed worlds, we are, ironically, finding it increasingly difficult to appreciate genuine individuality' (2002: 17).

identities have been incorporated into the organisation and interpretation of place, and, like the tourist, leisure time increasingly emphasises the commodification and consumption of place as an indicator of lifestyle and identity. The re-creation of the pub as a site of middle-class leisure has resulted in a more personalised and self-directed use of public space and as a result, has created distance between the pub and the patron. Furthermore, the use of surveillance cameras, bouncers, dress codes, cover charges and privatisation of pubs and clubs erode the pub as a place of the everyday. While these features create a sense of formality and exclusivity that corresponds to a new visual culture of the pub and caters to the postmodern need for individualised spaces, many informants report feelings of distance and alienation.

Moreover, the movement of leisure into the home place and the creation of the new domestic has also impacted upon the use of the third place, reducing its everyday use and leading, in some cases, to the closure of pubs, reinforced by new legislation and regulatory changes. The home place has developed as an appealing alternative in which individualised leisure can take place through an intensified process of reflexive consumption and of ego-casting. In this, the home environment has been produced as a more ideal ego-casting venue, in which the lifestyle needs of the individual are met through the selective consumption of culture, often with the assistance of technology. This movement out of the public sphere and into the private domain limits the formation and maintenance of social capital, potentially impacting on civic participation and community involvement.

These modern productions of place has resulted in ambiguous attitudes towards the pub and pub culture. While many participants in this project reported that pub culture remains relevant to their sense of identity and place, apathy towards socialising in the pub was also widely reported. Additionally, the everyday relationship to place-based social networks has been superseded by in-group participation, which relies on the appropriation of place as a mechanism for identity production. As a result, the social use of the pub has changed dramatically and the

pub as a third place is in many cases weakening. Conclusively, Irish pub culture and pub spaces have been commodified as personalised landscapes of leisure, consumption and lifestyle. The use of the pub, in the role of third place, is increasingly under threat as individuals begin to relate to place as a device of lifestyle and identity, ultimately resulting in the decline in pub use and an increased use in private domestic places.

Traditional signifiers of collective Irish identity that have been, in part, located in the place of the pub are shifting as well. This development emerged as a recurring theme throughout the primary research as informants expressed an awareness of their changing day-to-day relationship to community, place and the third place. While this awareness varies, many of the individuals interviewed had a well-developed sense of how their place in the community was changing. The closing or alteration of landmark pubs in the locale where the research was based and the national issue of pub closures generated tremendous debate on the nature of contemporary social geography. In the course of this research several pubs that have been identified as possessing a strong sense of place, as well as functioning successfully as third places in and around Sligo town, had closed or been refurbished into new places to the alarm of a number of informants. The replacement, recreation or dissolution of the third place in Ireland, further influenced by a postmodern repudiation of place through the creation and integration of new spaces and non-places into the everyday, will be discussed in chapter eight.

Chapter Eight: *New Places/Non-places and the Irish Pub*

> Our sense of place keeps getting vaguer … We find ourselves uprooted, adrift in an uncharted, alien terrain…. We've failed to accept that the old definitions of place no longer apply; place is now as much virtual as it is physical…. Our notion of place, then, must be reinvented…. If we are at last to create a contemporary sense of place … We need to acknowledge the ugly as well as the beautiful, the disturbing as well as the cozy, the virtual as well as the real. It is this totality that today constitutes the 'here.' (Bartolucci 1997: 60 – 61)

Fig.31 The last early-hours pub in town.

Introduction

Place, sociologist Patricia Yaeger argues, is essential for the cohesion of community and the promotion of 'communal intimacy' which informs and reassures individuals 'about the reality of the world and ourselves' (1999: 10). The third place provides a public point ideally designed to meet the place needs of the community. However, geographer Hannah Ardent described the rapidly changing public realm as a 'place that cease[s] to hold its citizens together' (1958: 9).

In exploring the cultural logic of the Irish pub I have argued that this semi-public geography effectively functions as a third place through the provision of a social

site to maintain communal cohesion and facilitate the infusion of social networks into community. The Irish pub and its use by the public, however, has undergone a significant and rapid transformation in contemporary Ireland. New trends in marketing and design have led to the emergence of pubs as themed environments with an emphasis on consumption. Consumption has become a primary function of contemporary space and place and Eco (1986), Baudrillard (1988) and Sennett (1991) argue that place itself has become a spectacle, a 'dreamscape ... for visual consumption' (Zukin, 1992: 219). Furthermore, themeing has become a primary mode of catering to the identity needs of the individual and the social niche group and is thus becoming more prevalent in public places. The pub as a third place, organically developing over time to satisfy particular conceptual and social needs of community life, is on the decline. Currently, pub attendance is falling and a number of pubs, particularly those in rural locations, have closed.

An increasingly ineffective public place and the loss of third places could, suggests Oldenburg, result in a number of negative effects on community. Jameson argues that the new landscapes of the contemporary indicate 'the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense – perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the postmodernisms' (1984: 60). The changing nature of public places, the blurring of home/work/leisure spaces, and the development of 'new' spaces[48] might also have further reaching social consequences as the public venues for the production of social capital are transformed or disappearing. Conceptually, the widespread modification or loss of third places could intrinsically impact our contemporary imaginings of time and space. Foucault suggests that social discourse will decline into a 'new and despairing intellectual terrain' (Yaeger, 1999: 3) as understandings of time are removed from a spatial framework:

> *Instead of providing a basis for what already exists ... instead of finding* reassurances ... that all is saved, one is forced to advance beyond familiar territory, far from the certainties to which one is accustomed, toward an as yet uncharted land and unforeseeable conclusion. Is there not a danger that

[48] New spaces include the postmodern geographies of simulated places, 'fourth place' (Wenner, 1997), 'non-places', cyber spaces and virtual spaces.

> everything that has so far protected the historian in his [sic] daily journey and accompanied him [sic] until nightfall ... may disappear, leaving for analysis a blank, indifferent space, lacking in both interiority and promise? (Foucault, 2002: 42)

The impact of new technologies is also significant to new time/space understandings and is increasingly informing contemporary modes of social exchange, subsequently affecting the use of third places. While communication and transportation technology have been viewed, in some cases, as contributing to the 'death of distance' (Cairncross, 1997) and facilitating greater access to specialised community networks, these same technologies can also result in the distancing of individuals from the immediate community. Similar to Rosen (2005) and Sunstein (2007), Kotkin suggests that information technology has eroded the 'physical constraints of wealth creation' and with it, 'the kind of attachments to a particular place that have been evident since the beginnings of civilization' (2001: 5). Technology is also identified as a primary feature of what Soja terms 'postmodern geographies' (2003) in which individuals exchange place intimacy with the commodification and consumption of place.

Oldenburg's discussion of changing place is useful, I have argued, in the analysis of the subsequent impact of modernity on the Irish pub. In his discussion of contemporary social space in America, Oldenburg laments the decline of the third place and concludes that individuals suffer due to deficiencies in social life. Continuing to draw on Oldenburg, I will argue that as the presence of the third place is transformed or diminishes into the postmodern geography there are significant consequences, individualistically, communally and socially. Furthermore, I will build on Oldenburg's assessment of the changing third place and will explore the reconfiguration of public space under late capitalism and examine the changing nature of community existence through the analysis of the Irish pub.

New places, non-places

As the landscape of the contemporary, as currently found throughout many parts of modern Ireland, 'is composed of suburbanised communities, shopping centres, strip malls, industrial estates and "hyperkinetic media environments"' (Wenner, 1997: 72), the theories of Soja (1996/2003), Lefebvre (1991) and Kellner (1992) regarding the formation of postmodern geographies have been germane in the analysis of changing pub space in Ireland. The rapid globalisation of Irish society and the unique development of a 'collision culture' (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004) have dramatically altered cultural conceptualisations of time, distance, space and place in a relatively short period of time. Soja suggests contemporary society is currently experiencing a breakdown in the continuity of place which has been replaced by 'the "restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes" ... [and has been] triggered by the dynamics of capitalist development' (2003: 158). Particularly apt to the analysis of space in the Celtic Tiger Ireland is Urry's assertion that the globalised society of the West has reconceptualised its time/place relationship and is now characterised by:

> the disembedding of time and space from social activities, the development of an 'empty' dimension of time, the separation of space from place, and the emergence of disembedding mechanisms, of symbolic tokens and expert systems, *which lift social relations out of local involvement*. (1995: 9) (emphasis added)

The deconstruction and reconfiguration of new spaces has led to a number of conceptual dilemmas. Yeager's concept of 'empty space' describes the aesthetic void of a postmodern world in which the 'boundaries of the physical world have shifted drastically – enforcing the need for new ways to talk about space' (1999: 10). She notes:

> We have to ask why the trope of abandonment, blankness, vacancy, or void appears willy-nilly, whether we are contemplating the archival provinces of poststructuralist history, the hyperreal world of commodity fetishism, or the uncivil world of political action. (Yeager, 1999: 9)

In assessing the changing landscape of the Irish pub, trends have emerged in which Yaeger's concept of empty space can be observed. The traditional function of the

Irish third place as a host to specific types of social interaction, as previously noted, is undergoing a rapid transformation. Under the conditions of modernity pubs have moved from primary sites of community networks to venues for the construction and maintenance of lifestyle.[49] The pub as a site for the production and distribution of social capital has been, I have argued, declining as individuals affiliate themselves to self-selected niche social groups, forming exclusive bonding networks. Bridging networks, which rely on the random and often unplanned interaction of individuals who have various interests, knowledge and expertise, is significantly reduced through increasingly controlled social interactions. In some cases, the pub has been extended as a venue for the performance of the identities of individuals and groups, either through the staging of a 'blank' environment in which any identity 'type' can be projected or through the use of prescribed theme environment. These pubs can be identified by their constantly shifting clientele – no one seems familiar, no one stays long.

Postmodern individuals and social niche groups embrace themeing and branding as mechanisms for identity construction. As individuals are further distanced from the locale in which they live and seek out other places and other people in which to construct identities, the themeing of social environments has become an effective means for the consumption of lifestyle. For example, as discussed in chapter six, a number of respondents recognised and described 'their' pub (as well as their home, their car, their job, etc.) as an accurate reflection of a chosen social identity. For many participants, a number of commodified consumables available in the pub had become designated identity signifiers selected on account of a perceived alignment to concept of self. Interviewees suggested that beverages and food, décor, music, the personality and social affiliation of the bar staff, and the clientele 'type' as being significant aspects to their social categorisation of place. The selection of a themed environment and the ongoing process of egocasting facilitates an

[49] Again, this progression varies from pub to pub. While some pubs have been established or modified to draw in individuals through the commodification of place, other pubs have managed to maintain their status as third places, although this appears to be under threat, particularly in rural areas and especially in the North West of Ireland.

individualised yet public geography in which the individual can be situated within a lifestyle. Themed leisure sites, through the continuous availability of consumables consistent to specific identity-types, are opportune environments for individuals engaged in the construction and maintenance of the self-brand.

In addition to sustaining lifestyle, themed social environments also provide a location in which identity can be temporarily transformed or reinvented. Historically, themed sites of leisure have been produced to provide entertainment within a fantasy landscape[50] for the general public to passively consume as spectators. However, new themed environments are produced to actively extend and enhance individual conceptualisations of self within the everyday on an on-going basis. While some themed environments, as in the case of the theme-pub, are developed to encompass a motif in its entirety, others rely on a more general and random method of themeing. During my visits to pubs, I observed that themeing appeared on a spectrum from pub to pub, from the use of random artefacts to provide atmosphere, to a more intentional placement and use of related objects in order to produce a well-crafted environment, to the complete production of what sociologist Lawrence Wenner (2002) refers to as a 'fourth place'. Indeed, 'Irishness' itself has been themed to varying degrees and has been incorporated into the majority of pubs throughout the country and exported to pubs, bars and restaurants abroad.[51]

Unlike the third place, the primary purpose of the fourth place is not to provide a location for social groups to engage in the community, but is instead focused on the commodification of place for consumption. Fourth spaces are designed, not as a component of the social geography, but to draw in particular social niche groups through the availability of consumables in an artificially constructed landscape. Simply by being present, the individual actively engages in the themeing and

[50] For example, world fairs, theme parks, themed restaurants, resorts, etc. have been produced as themed sites of fantasy and leisure for over a hundred years.
[51] See Munoz *et al* (2006) and Lego *et al* (2002) for further reading on 'Irishness' and the themeing of pubs.

'becomes' what has been defined by the space – the sport fan/yuppie/nationalist or patriot/bohemian/artist/beverage connoisseur[52]/etc.

Irish fourth places have emerged primarily through the creation of new pub spaces in which a variety of representations of time and space co-exist in a themed environment. Fourth places, as described by Wenner in his analysis of a sports bar, are characterised by spaces that have been developed to replicate a third place environment. He observes that 'the sports bar is partly modern and partly postmodern, partly the 'great good place' and partly a commodified construction of bricolage on the highway strip or mall,' and notes:

> the evolutionary path that is the sports bar *can be seen as an attempt to seamlessly bridge the modern with the postmodern by constructing a 'physical culture museum'*. (emphasis added) (73)

Decontextualised from a community setting, this created environment provides a generic atmosphere that simulates an idyllic and generalised version of familiar third place. Fourth places are sites of consumption and mimic third places of cultural relevance renown for their availability of social networking. For example, various pubs and bars (Irish, Australian, British, etc.), sports bars, biker bars, country stores and restaurants, coffee shops, main streets, diners and cafes are often replicated in the production of fourth places. Pubs that are constructed to function as fourth places are designed to be immediately identified by the patrons through their reflection of the pub as an idealised third place.

In an attempt to create an idealised environment, themeing and the construction of fourth places typically draw on nostalgic representations of cultural institutions of the past and false nostalgia is largely featured. It could be argued, as in chapter six, that this development meets the needs of both tourists visiting the country and individuals within the locale:

> the typical Irish theme pub ... cannot be considered indicative of today's Ireland, yesterday's Ireland, or any other Ireland this side of *The Quiet Man*. Irish theme pubs, in point of fact, are commercially-motivated

[52] As found in wine bars, microbreweries, coffee houses or juice bars.

> commodifications of the Celtic Revival of the late-nineteenth century, which was itself a politically-motivated commodification – an invented tradition – of half baked Irish pre-history.... Themed environments, then, are in thrall to the past. (2000: 657)

Pubs constructed or modified into fourth places are also designed to appeal to a wider public through the production of a non-threatening environment that is manufactured to be a consistent, predictable, socially neutral and highly individualised experience. Much in the way that franchises are designed, hence, the emergence of pub franchises. Fourth places also attempt smooth over social hierarchies or exclusivity that can found in drinking houses by removing class and gender from the package so that, for example, a middle class woman can enjoy drinking beer in the Temple Bar 'biker bar' *Thunder Road*. As a result, social networking outside of one's own group, particularly participation in bridging networks, is limited.

Fig.32 Biker theme bar and restaurant, Temple Bar, Dublin (Thunder Road Café, n.d.).

Wenner's description of the fourth place relates to Umberto Eco's concept of the 'Absolute Fake' (1986) - a replication of ordinary space to fill 'empty space' through the simulation of authentic environments. While mimicking the appearance of the third place through themeing, the Absolute Fake is not generated

to replicate the role of a community space but is instead designed to provide sequential experiences of consumption. Eco describes the Absolute Fake as:

> a 'degenerate utopia' ... an ideology realised in the form of myth ... presented as at once absolutely realistic and absolutely fantastic ... a disguised supermarket, where you buy obsessively, believing that you are still playing ... more hyperrealistic ... precisely because the latter still tries to make us believe that what we are seeing reproduces reality absolutely. (Eco, 1986: 43 – 36)

Although Eco's concept of the Absolute Fake cannot be applied to most pubs in Ireland, elements of the Absolute Fake can be observed, for example, in the use of themeing and place commodification found throughout the majority of pubs in Ireland. There are, however, some exceptions. The pub constructed for tourists as an authentic 'Irish pub' in Bunratty Castle, the Irish pub in the international departure lounge in Dublin airport and a number of pubs in the Temple Bar area of Dublin could be interpreted as genuine 'Absolute Fakes'. These pubs have been intentionally constructed to imitate that which is 'real' in which 'the studied illusion takes over ... the realism of the reconstruction ...[in] life size and executed with absolute fidelity (Eco, 1986: 40 – 41). Most pubs can be interpreted on a spectrum of 'real-real' and Absolute Fake, with the Bunratty Castle pub as the latter in its use of the spectacular to provide a theme park experience. The Irish theme-park pub is attempting to replicate elements of reality, however false, into its product, thus evoking a sense of authenticity and connectedness to 'the real thing.' This is particularly evocative outside of Ireland, where diasporic notions of Irish heritage and identity have been commodified for consumption, largely through the Irish theme pub. As a result, Irish pubs have world-wide popularity in which Irish identity is portrayed as a homogenous experience, an essential feature of branding. Indeed, Irish pub franchises have been derived to provide opportunity for the ultimate branding experience (i.e. everyone can be a little bit Irish at the pub, when drinking Guinness, etc.). Franchising also provides optimal marketing and merchandising potential.

The simulation of social environments, in the case of the Irish pub, has become so widespread that it has become difficult to detect replication. One informant

suggested that the pub she used as her primary site for socialising, is 'very real ... isn't it? It's really old fashioned and *like* a real pub ... It feels very real. It's probably been like this for a long time, just look at the state of it' (S42F). However, on closer inspection the pub had been installed with various 'props' to present an atmosphere of antiquity and heritage. Another interviewee noted, 'it's to the point where you can't tell where you are anymore and what's real [in pub space] or not' (C66M). Brown and Patterson argue that:

> replica 'Irish' pubs are actually displacing 'real' Irish pubs, 'actual' Irish pubs, 'genuine' Irish pubs in Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Enniskillen and elsewhere ... In fact, the vast majority of new pubs in Ireland are themed, although preferred formats are not confined to imitation Irishness.[53] (2000: 648)

While some individuals, as above, were unsure or unclear of their interpretation of new pub spaces, other respondents were able to articulate their sense of authenticity and replication:

> It's like a stage set in a play, it might have the same bits on it that you have in your [own] home, but you can tell it's not real. You have two pubs with similar looks, but one feels right, and the other feels fake.... It's just a feeling. (J46M)

As the statement above illustrates, informants often classified pub authenticity and replication through the use of contrasting terms such as new or old, fake or real, trendy or local, modern or traditional. Some respondents reported a sense of 'fake-ness' or 'phoniness' when the pub environment appears out of context. Themed Irishness was described as 'plastic paddyism,' 'paddy-wackery,' 'diddly-eye,' 'paddy-fakery,' 'paddy-nonsense' or just 'fake,' 'pretend,' or 'plastic.' Informants tended to express ambiguous views of Irish pubs abroad, appearing particularly critical of the degree of replication used for themeing:

> It's a bit plastic paddyism now, bought out of kit and stuff and designed by Guinness, and it's the same.... I mean you could be walking into the Strand or you could be walking into a pub in Majorca like. But, ... well there was one in

[53] The authors, however, admit that '[t]heme pubs ... may not be new' (2000: 650). Brown and Patterson note that: 'Thirty years ago, Cooper pined for an end to ever-proliferating excrescences of Plywood Jacobean, Neutered Jazz and Neo-Georgian Country Grammar, claiming that 'the last genuine pub was probably built somewhere around the year 1914.... Everything since them has been either a compromise or in a way a kind of fake' (2000: 648).

> Majorca but the people who ran it, well most of them were Irish. But still it's not the same. You're drinking espressos like, instead of pints of Guinness. It's a bit of a cod. (R44F)

Yet informants also reported seeking out and enjoying Irish theme pubs (see *figure 18*) when away from home:

> I mean I got bored with them [Irish pubs] after a while because I was like 'hang on, I'm in Germany and I'm drinking in an Irish pub, how sad is that?' ... it was McGlaughlans, it was called, like it played Irish music, either diddly-eye or U2 and stuff like that and it served pints of Guinness and it was all decked out in green and orange. That type of thing. And there was an English pub and it was a gas because the English pub was really different. You know it was a different atmosphere, you know there was an edge to it. You know what I mean? The Irish pub was nice and relaxed. It was great. We did drink in German pubs but it wasn't the same craic. (M36F)

Fig. 33 'Whisky themed' pub, Wisconsin (Ol' Irish Bar, n.d.).

Similarly, many participants expressed mixed feelings regarding participation in their local pub culture. While many of those interviewed were concerned with the waning popularity and closures of 'authentic' pubs, many individuals also conceded that their own preference of place was contributing to the issue. A number of interviewees admitted that community-based pubs, especially those in rural areas, were frequently abandoned in favour of pubs more aligned to lifestyle preferences and social group values, typically found in larger villages and towns. Simultaneously, a number of informants reported that they have limited contact with their community or 'really don't know their neighbours' and

'rarely/seldom/only occasionally attend the local pub.' Observations carried out in a number of pubs over the course of this research reflect this assessment with rural pubs notably experiencing a decline in business. This has occurred despite an increase in population throughout a number of rural areas. For example, in a rural pub in Maugherow, an area 20 km outside of Sligo town, a local noted: 'this place used to be full on a Saturday, there was a disco here. Now you wouldn't come down here or you'd be drinking your pint all by yourself' (J41M). As a result, a sense of a loss of authentic pub place was noted by many in both rural areas and townships:

> All the real pubs are gone or going. Look how many here in [Sligo] town have closed their doors ... it's gonna keep changing, you know? We'll go into some of these places where there used to be *great craic*. There was music and we would be packed in like sardines. [Now] they're empty [and] sometimes on the weekends too. (G25M)

> You have the car. No one wants to stay close to home anymore when you can go out on the town, like, and have a good time. The old pubs don't appeal to the young people anymore ... they want these new places that don't even look like the pub ... they want to be seen spending their money [and] they've got the money to spend too. (F42M)

> You'd think that some of these pubs would be national treasures, so. You'd think that they would be protected and preserved because they're so old and there's so much gone on in them.... They want to tear them out by the insides and put in the trendy night club ... it's disgraceful. (A52M)

> It's a shame. Because it seems like in rural Ireland the rural pub was a focal point for so many different things ... as these become less and less a focal point, rural Ireland is losing a kind of focus. People are more isolated. (J36M)

Contrary to the sentiments expressed above, however, several interviewees believed that the closing of pubs was a positive development. These individuals stated that there are 'too many' pubs to begin with (J40F), or noted the 'changing times' which is reflected in the transformation of the pub place (C54M). Others suggested that Ireland 'has enough problems with pubs and with drinking' and any change in regard to the culture is productive (B26M). A considerable number of participants also wanted to see other social sites emerge in Ireland: 'The cafes

wouldn't be open after six ... and then all you have is a restaurant and you can hardly spend an evening there and the price. The pub is the only option' (F34F).

The integration of artificial spaces into the social geography alters cultural understandings of identity and place on a number of levels. As a result of the widespread production of themed spaces, the meaning of place is transformed as the relationship of the community to the individual becomes tentative, transitory and meaningless beyond the confines of individual experience. Like the tourist, identity is increasingly informed by artificial spaces where reference to perceived times and places ('home', 'youth', 'rural', 'heritage', etc.) are manufactured exclusively for purposes of consumption. Fourth places, while appearing to provide a temporary solution to the loss of place within the emerging postmodern geography, are ultimately inadequate due to their dislocation from community. Because of its primary role of quintessential third place, the extension of themeing into the Irish pub and the production of the pub as a fourth place are particularly precarious developments. The loss or transformation of the third place throughout Irish society appears to be related, for many of the informants, to a sense of disconnection from community and loss of place.

The repudiation of place

In addition to the proliferation of themeing and the production of fourth places, further developments in the organisation of a postmodern geography have contributed to the repudiation of place and the diminishing power of the Irish pub. New conceptualisations of time, space and place have led to the tireless reinvention of Irish culture and the continuous evolution of new places. This typically occurs through the development of a succession of new landscapes, including the reconfiguration of the pub as a fourth place and the emergence of a social non-places/cyberspace. Mitchell states that the 'worldwide computer network – the electronic agora – subverts, displaces, and radically redefines our notions of gathering place, community and urban life' (1997: 5). Business consultant William

Knoke goes as far to suggest that 'we are entering the fourth dimension' which, he claims, is characterised as a 'placeless society' (in Kotkin, 1997: 6). In this hyper-reality, space can be located everywhere, yet exists nowhere and non-places supersede place. This 'anti-geography' of a globalised society, as increasingly found in Ireland, has become normalised through the integration of digital media, the internet, hyper-reality, e-mail and cybercommunities, mobile phone and blackberry use and other new modes of communication and social networking.[54] Harvey notes:

> we are forced to alter ... how we represent the world to ourselves.... Space appears to shrink to a 'global village' of telecommunications and a 'spaceship earth' of economic and ecological interdependencies ... we have to learn how to cope with an overwhelming sense of *compression* of our spatial and temporal worlds. (1989: 240)

The growing reliance on non-places for social interaction has altered the individual sense of self and 'much of what has shaped our understanding of geography and place has been transformed irrevocably,' leading to a diminishing public place (Kotkin, 1997: 4). As fixed identities dissolve into the postmodern geography, individuals are permitted to transcend traditional conceptualisations of the self. Identities can fragment and be creatively reconstructed. Indeed, one can present the self anyway that she or he decides[55] and some informants perceive a benefit in the ability to construct identity through the cyberspace medium: 'it's easier to meet people [on-line] sometimes because ... they don't know anything about you and you can be who you want' (W25M).

Technology also enhances the contemporary identity process of self-reinvention and ego-casting, allowing individuals to bypass geography at an accelerated pace and rely extensively on non-places to inform constantly shifting identities.

[54] For example, Myspace, Flicker, Facebook, Bebo, Secondlife, etc.

[55] While cyberspace has provided individuals with freedom from place, the ability to control one's presentation of self has been a critique in the use of this communication medium. The internet has been condemned for its promotion of exhibitionism, self-promotion and the more salacious issues of bullying and abuse have brought the issue of anonymity, identity and self presentation into public discourse. See Bryan Appleyard's 'Notorious nobodies,' *The Sunday Times Magazine,* 05/08/07, for a discussion on the presentation of the virtual self.

Liberated from the 'tyranny of past association' (Kotkin, 1997: 5), 'locational choice becomes more elastic' and individuals become fully empowered agents in their use or repudiation of place (*ibid*: 7). As a result, individuals are increasingly savvy in their use of technology and non-spaces for their self-reinvention:

> For such a notion of identity of an artificial construct suggests that one can always change one's life, that identity can always be reconstructed, that one is free to change and produce oneself as one chooses. (Kellner, 1992: 154)

With the suffusion of technology throughout society, individual experience of physicality is superseded by a virtual presence of a carefully constructed identity, leaving the placement of the individual within a physical geography inconsequential. One informant aptly states that with the use of cyberspace, 'you don't always have to meet up with people anymore' to engage socially (A27F). Disconnected from place, virtual communities can become:

> socially ramified, topically fused, and psychologically detached, with a limited liability. In this sense, if we understand community to include the close, emotional, holistic times … then the virtual community is not true community. (Driskall and Lyon, 2002: 373)

A number of social commentators and academics argue that virtual communities are 'genuine' communities in the sense that they can foster the formation of a dense, multi-layered network of reciprocal relationships.[56] However, sociologist C. Calhoun suggests that 'relationships forged with the aid of electronic technology may do more to foster categorical identities than they do dense, multiplex, and systematic networks of relationships' (1998: 373).

The instant accessibility to information and social groups especially appealed to younger participants of this research whose generations[57] are characterised by the constant presence of personalised technology and who have become increasingly affiliated with this reality. On the surface, communication technology and

[56] See Driskell and Lyon (2002) 'Are virtual communities true communities? Examining the environments and elements of community,' for an in-depth discussion on this topic.
[57] This includes generation X, those born between 1965 and 1978, and the millennials, those born between 1979 and 1988 and the upcoming generation, which has yet to be named.

cybercommunities appear to eliminate the need for place and community (see *figure 34*) and transpose it with what Kellner describes as 'culture disintegrating into pure image without referent or content or effects' (1992: 147). Most informants, however, described a combined use of place and non-place to inform identity, form social networks and describe their participation in on-line communities as an extension of social life. For example, one informant described her online activity as combined with her bonding network based within the locale. She notes that her personal Myface page reinforced her social network, as it is maintained 'really just for ... friends, you know? I wouldn't want strangers looking at my pictures' (T24F). Another research participant described his use of place and non-place to host separate social spheres:

> I have my mates from school ... and university, my best friends I guess you could say, and then there's the lads from work. And then the [cybercommunity], like, there would be people I chat with ... and have a bit of craic and conversation and the like, [but] I wouldn't know anything about [their] home life. I go out with the lads around here most weekends and sometimes after work ... but then I might have a few nights on the computer or I might be on it in the office or on the weekend ... they're just different groups that I socialise with but I guess they're not really together as such. (T33M)

Place-based bonding groups typically attend third places to reinforce group identity and intimacy. Cybercommunities and other forms of communication technology are used either as a continuation of already existing bonding groups[58] or to generate a separate, more specialised niche group connected through a common identity. For example, some informants reported membership to specialised web groups for bonding purposes relating to a particular area of interest, such as gaming, football, support groups for various social and health issues, professional topics, music or politics. Driskell and Lyon suggest that the use of non-places for social networking can either enhance or supersede place-based bonding groups:

> *if virtual communities are indeed true communities ... [c]an the virtual* community provide two core elements – common ties and social interaction – without identification of place? That does not necessarily imply, however, that the internet relationships are the antithesis of true community relationships.

[58] As in the case of a number of informants who used personalised web sites, face pages, blogs and photo sharing sites for additional communication with friends and family.

The internet may either reduce community, reinforce community, or provide a weak replacement. (2002: 373)

Fig. 34 Irish pub, Secondlife.

Although the repudiation of place allows for greater personal choice, high-speed accessibility to exclusive and placeless social niche groups contributes to the disconnection to community and what demographer William Frey refers to as the 'balkanization of populations' (in Kotkin, 2001: 185). Contributing to this disconnection is the limited opportunity that communication technology and cybercommunities provide for bridging networks to develop. The use of technology, self-branding and other mechanisms of egocasting have led to a narrowing of community interaction, an increased homogenisation of social networks and a decrease in the production of social capital.

Conclusion

The experience of participating in a shared, everyday public place, as described in the introduction to this thesis, has a number benefits for the individual. Comfort,

sociability, equality and relaxation, are just a few of the sensations experienced by the participant. Successful pubs, for example, provide their patrons with a subtle blending of visual culture, authenticity and comfort to evoke visceral and emotional reactions, which in turn encourage the incorporation of that everyday place into her lifeworld. The inclusion of such a place typically results in enhanced opportunities to form useful social networks and, as outlined in chapter one, is advantageous to the individual in a number of ways. The replication of such places as in the case of themed pubs, 'fourth places' or new places, however, is less successful in terms of community cohesion and sense of belonging. Although increasingly popular, the new geographies cannot provide the same benefits as that of a relationship with a successful, public third place. The place of the pub is under threat and many individuals who use pubs to maintain social bonds are without place. Moreover, the repudiation of place is underway as individuals construct identities through lifestyle, resulting in environment modification and the filtration of culture. Within these descriptions of people in pub places, new places and non-places, is an implicit theme that the relationships that people form with place is constantly being shaped and reshaped, reflecting the social relations of the time.

Chapter 10: *Research Summaries and Conclusions*

Introduction

A sense of place is based in our perceived connections to a particular location and in the individual and shared meaning. Connection to place motivates people to commit to community and enhances social capital which, as Putnam (2000) has demonstrated, benefits society in a number of meaningful ways. However, Jameson (1984), through his analysis of city space, argues that for social cohesion to exist, an intimate and shared relationship to geography is essential:

> the alienated city is above all, a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves.... Disalienation in the traditional city, then, involves the practical reconquest of a sense of place, and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory and which the individual subject can map and remap along the moments of mobile, alternate trajectories. (1984: 93)

The third place is ideally suited to meet a number of place needs of individuals, groups and communities as it provides an accessible location free from the pressures of both the domestic life and the work place and serves as a 'home from home'. The basic function of third places, to convene, relax and communicate - 'the cardinal and sustaining activity' of the third place (Oldenburg, 1999: 26) brings people together in the everyday to form social networks that can improve the lives of people and enhance community life. Third places often provide a number of functions whose benefits may extend out into the wider community and include, for example, informality, inclusiveness, levelling, locality, assembly, novelty and diversity. These features draw participants to return, inhabit and create a shared habitat of meaning, leading place to become 'infused with meaning' (Rose, 1993: 88). The interdependent relationship that forms between people and place and the formative process of specific places can play a key role in the construction and expression of identities. As noted by research participants, the presence and use of the third place was a significant factor in the developing a sense of identity, belonging and community cohesiveness. This research has identified the Irish pub

as a 'particular landscape' (Daniels, 1993) that has become embedded in Irish cultural identity.

The decline of shared places

Third places require communities in which to grow and develop and to reflect and provide for the needs of place members. Community life, as stated by the majority of informants for this research, has dramatically transformed under the recent developments of the Celtic Tiger. The formation of niche social groups and an emphasis on bonding networks have increasingly replaced relationships that are based within everyday community life. This thesis has also suggested that self-selecting social groups may function as enclaves that are bounded within a broader social context and breed social polarisation, impacting the production of social capital (bridging) networks. These groups often share similar views, filtering and avoiding the more random and diverse social encounters that occur within open, public places which, as is argued in this thesis, breeds polarisation and removes identity from community. As Sunstein argues 'many people are mostly hearing more and louder echoes of their own voices' (2007: 65). The use of personalised technology further encourages the aggregation of individuals who use place as a means to construct lifestyle through the tailoring of personal environments to coincide to individual preferences in a way that erodes mass culture, resulting in an increased fragmentation of the people/place relationship.

Correspondingly, the use of space and place has also undergone a number of changes. Rapid socio-economic development and suburbanisation, the agglomeration of suburban-style developments in rural areas, increasing retail space and commuting and traffic congestion have become familiar characteristics of a modern Ireland. The creation of a postmodern geography has produced a number of new spaces, including a 'new' rural Ireland, that meet the needs of individuals and social niche groups in a newly organised and increasingly individualised society. The use of themeing and the production of fourth places

and non-places facilitate the process of egocasting by subverting the influence of place on the individual or by prescribing a themed category that individuals and groups 'become' upon entering. Moreover, digitised media and communication technology are effectively used by individuals, comfortable in their modernity, to filter out unwanted elements in the surrounding environment. The use of technology in public spaces further distances individuals from social experience and creates the phenomenon of absent presences (Gergen, 2005). While cybercommunities and communication technology are not currently in direct competition with the third place, they provide an alternative space for individuals to extend practices of egocasting and to satisfy bonding needs. The use of technology in public spaces, such as providing wireless connection or internet terminals for example, does not appear to successfully engage these individuals with their surroundings (Skerratt, Preece and McLoughlin, 2004; Gergen, 2005). Furthermore, increased opportunities for reflexive consumption, egocasting and lifestyle choices reduce community cohesion:

> when the communications options grow dramatically, people will make increasingly diverse choices, and their shared experiences, plentiful in a time of general interest intermediaries will decrease accordingly. This can erode the kind of social glue that is provided by shared experience, knowledge, and tasks. (Sunstein: 92)

As a result of the changing relationship to place, this thesis has argued that the character and use of the third place has been transformed or is fading into the postmodern geography. Public discourse concerning this development tend to focus on social and economic factors such as the price of the pint, demographic changes, the emergence of a new domestic space, the smoking ban and other regulatory practices. Although these factors certainly contribute to the changes in pub space and the overall reduction in pub attendance and closures, I believe that the plasticity of identity and the coinciding transformation of time, space and place have resulted in a general repudiation of place, negatively impacting the Irish third place. This disconnection between place and community, as evidenced by the loss of pub places, contributes to the creation of a conceptual void and is not without consequences. Barber (2003) reasserts this concern and notes:

> Segmentation and narrowcasting is good for marketing but deadly to common deliberation. Specialization and niching helps politics of special interest and nondeliberative polling but hurts national common civic identity and makes democracy problematic. (44)

Opportunities to build bridging networks, dependent on chance encounters in an open, public forum, are less likely to develop and thrive as individuals limit their social time to prescribed social networks. Recent reports from rural areas indicate that older people, especially older men, have become increasingly isolated as primary points of social interaction disappear or are replaced. Loss of social place has been linked to alienation, isolation and depression, particularly among those groups who heavily rely on pub places to maintain social connections (North Leitrim Men's Group: 2001). In light of continued place change, the long-term impact of contemporary changes in the people/place relationship and in the repudiation of place remains to be seen.

Summary of points of thesis

This research set out to investigate the people/place relationship and examine the ways in which people shape place, place shapes people and how that relationship is implicated in the construction of identities. This thesis explores the extent to which Oldenburg's notion of the third place could be applied to the Irish pub. In doing so, the project developed, applied and expanded the concept of the third place using the Irish pub as an investigative lens. In the role of third place, the Irish pub is an ideal location to document and investigation of the processes of place. Through a deployment and analysis of pub places and the people who inhabit them, an extensive expansion the concept of the third place was also possible. Moreover, through a detailed examination of the people/place relationship, an opportunity to socially situate Irish pubs within broader patterns of social life has emerged. The conceptualisation of the Irish pub as a third place also provides a theoretical framework within which new ways of understanding the activities and experiences that occur in the pub can be investigated. The project critically engages with the

pub to increase the sociological understanding of and assess the importance that public drinking houses have in the everyday.

This thesis is also an articulation of a cultural shift within Ireland whose ramifications are deep and multi-layered. The findings of this research are significant because on a cultural level it details a change in one of the principal defining images of Irishness – the Irish pub. Furthermore, the research is significant on a social level because it links this cultural shift within time and space to changes in social behaviour and discovers new ways in which contemporary Irish society is operating. It is important on a fundamental human level in the way it documents how these cultural and social changes are having real and observable effects on Irish people.

In drawing this thesis to a conclusion, a return to the themes that thread through the chapters of this thesis that include place, place experience and identity is useful. This project is about the ways that people determine space, define place and create everyday habitats of meaning through an exploration of the Irish pub:

- *Within larger social patterns, all places are unique and form as a result of an inter-related set of social relations.* This thesis has traced changing discourses and social relations through time and space to investigate the formation of the pub as a third place and the changing pub landscape of today. The research presented here describes how, for example, the development of the pub initially reflected the cultural organisation of gender, family and community and led to the construction of the pub as a male-dominated institution, one that created, reflected and reinforced identities of hegemonic masculinity. Moreover, the analysis also found that pubs continue to develop in tandem with culture and society and, like other important sites of public interaction, contribute to the construction and expression of identities.
- *People create places and places contribute to conceptual understandings of identity.* Being together in place and sharing activities is pleasurable, but it is also socially meaningful on a number of levels. The pub functions as a 'habitat

of meaning' (Hannerz, 1996) in which a number of formative processed are situated. People construct, reconstruct and express identity through the sites that they inhabit. As well, places are constructed over time to meet the needs of society, communities, groups and individuals. The impact of space and place in the formation and presentation and negotiation of identities is a reoccurring theme throughout this analysis. Chapter 6, for example, illustrates how place informs and contributes to the construction of identities in the discussion of the touristic use of pubs. This research demonstrates how the people/place relationship develops interdependently and is maintained within a larger social and cultural context.

- *Places, like the identities of the people who inhabit them, are not fixed but shift and change through time and space.* This research has linked the changing discourses in relation to the differentiation of space and use of place. Like the Donegal pub described in the beginning of this thesis, the processes of modernisation are contributing to transformations in the social landscape and these changes are reflected in the places and in the people who inhabit them. This thesis shows a more nuanced understanding of some aspects of late modernity as the construction of identity has become increasingly distanced from place and led by reflexive consumption and ego-casting. A loss or transformation of public places and third places in particular has a number of consequences. The decrease in a shared culture and participation in public spaces reduces shared experiences and social bridging networks, diminishing the proclivity to feel social inclusion and meaningfulness.

In drawing this thesis to a conclusion, a return to the themes that thread through the chapters of this thesis is useful. This project is about the ways that people determine space, define place and create everyday habitats of meaning through an exploration of the Irish pub. The research presented here contributes to the sociology of the pub and the exploration of the people/place relationship in a number of ways: by determining the pub to function as a third place; by pointing

out the links that exist between pub places, pub users and identity construction; by indicating that place change plays a significant role in changing identities; and by demonstrating that changes in social behaviour effects the construction and experience of place.

Further development of the concept of the third place may assist social scientists to develop a more complex understanding of the relationship between community life and public spaces and to enable a fuller comprehension how those spaces effect experience and are implicated in the formation of identities. For example, an approach that emphasises the effect of the material world and the significant role that it plays in the quality of the everyday human experience would be useful for producing a textured account of the people/place relationship and the creation of successful or unsuccessful places.

The link between successful places and the growth and maintenance of social capital, public discourse and democracy is another area that warrants further testing. Further investigation into the extent to which pub changes or pub losses impact the lives of those within the immediate community would be sociologically significant. Here, perhaps, an applied ethnographic approach would be insightful.

While in respect to this research, several methods were applied to address the multiple dimensions of the pub experience and, as much as was possible, to overcome any shortcomings of the use of a single method. However, the ethnographic element could obviously be expanded over time to provide a more intimate picture of pub culture and to tease out a specific knowledge of a pub place. This would also allow for a deeper exploration into specific aspects of pub culture such as new patterns of binge drinking, for example. Also, the development and application of a more detailed pub typology could be useful, especially as pub places are undergoing transformation.

It could be viewed as a criticism that other types of pub inhabitants such as tourists, bar staff and publicans were not formally interviewed. However, a general framework was applied to the scope of the research for a number practical reasons that include, among others, time restraints and the decision to focus on the experiences of pub users'. There are, of course, opportunities to widen the research lens to incorporate other actors in pub culture – the stories and interpretations of bar staff, publicans and the pub industry as a whole would provide a larger and more comprehensive picture. Moreover, research that widens the study of drinking houses to include urban and suburban pubs would also broaden the understanding of Irish pub places.

This research could also lead to a number of broader research projects that incorporate a number of other disciplines and methodologies. Designers and planners of public places are only beginning to comprehend, for example, the ways in which the spatial patterning of space determines the quality and success of the people/place relationship (Hillier, 1996). The key point is that the material culture of place and the presence of diverse and active social networks play an integral role as to whether places will be successful. As postmodern geographies extend into the Irish landscape, this concept warrants further investigation.

New pub places?

The recognition of this loss, however, may provide a springboard for the reframing of pub culture and pub uses, or lead to the invention of new public places that are more aligned to the social needs of contemporary Ireland. As I have demonstrated, every place is uniquely formed as a result of a specific set of social relations within a wider cultural context. The Irish pub formed in conjunction with an emerging set of social relations and political and economic dynamics which led to the development of the Irish pub as a successful third place. Within this framework, pub places were constructed and reconstructed by the people who inhabited them, leading to the Irish pub of today. This interdependent relationship informed the

experiences, behaviours and identities of communities, groups and individuals. Today this model is shifting and being redefined.

Pubs are expanding services and offering a more varied types of service to draw people in. Recent years have seen a boom in outdoor drinking facilities, partly a result of the smoking ban, but also because of an attempt to extend the inside world of the pub out into the street. A move towards more of a café style pub, that offers a variety of teas, coffee and food, reduces the dominance of alcohol and makes the pub more accessible during the day to a larger number of people. This especially appeals to women, who can more comfortably attend these places on their own or with children. Another development in the pub industry is the expansion of the more traditional pub activities of darts, snooker and cards to other, more eclectic activities. During this research a number of pubs began to host, for example, Irish lessons, singer/songwriter evenings, karaoke, chess matches, local comedy and improvised theatre acts and film screenings. Many of these pubs have consciously attempted to create 'community centres' and encourage new 'regulars', especially during the daytime hours, hosting local events (as described above), and again, offering quality non-alcoholic beverages like coffees and teas to draw in a wider clientele from the community. Other pubs, eager to maintain their clientele of regulars, have organised taxi services to safely transport their customers to and from the pub.

Fig. 35 New pub activities.

The continued importance of place

Yet while the power of the third place is diminishing and the use of manufactured spaces and non-places for social networking is expanding, place continues to retain social importance, albeit in a more individualised manner that is increasingly focused on consumption. Kotkin argues that despite the breakdown of more traditional understandings of community, space and place remain important to the lives of individuals. Similarly, Yaeger believes that society cannot abandon its connection to place and alludes to the possibly that geography is perhaps inherently relevant to social life. She asks:

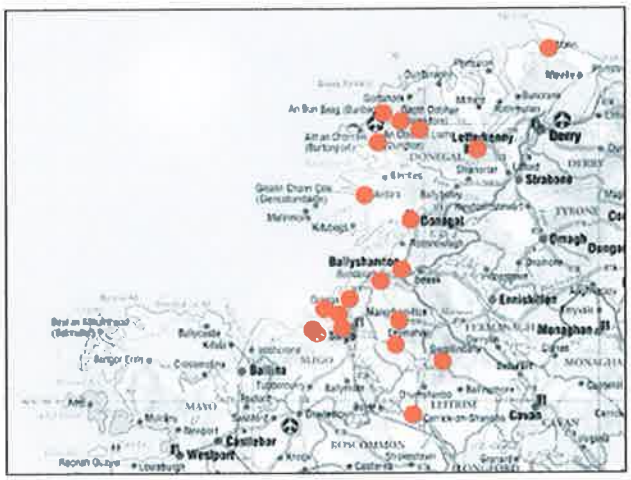
> Why has the spatial world ... become such an indispensable category of social and cultural analysis?' and suggests that society is currently 'confront[ing] a new revolution in social space. This revolution is partly physical, reflecting cataclysmic changes in the corporeal world. But it is also conceptual. (1999: 10)

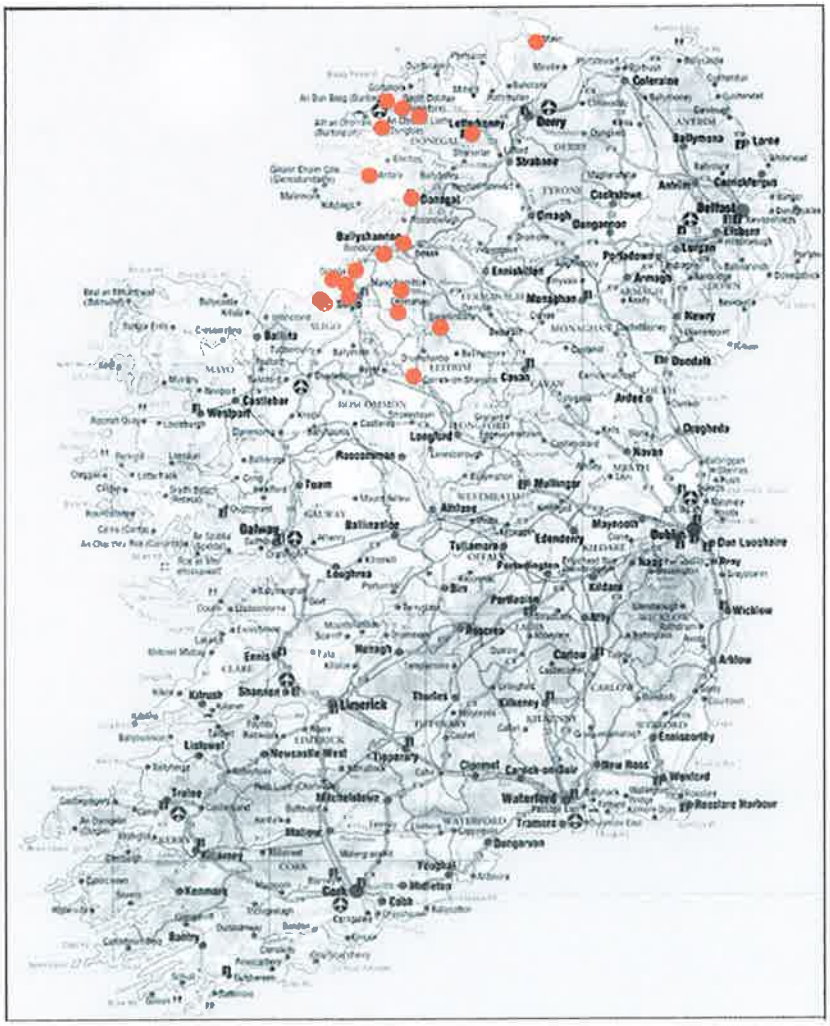
The emergence of a new public sphere depends on whether social, cultural, spatial and technological barriers to full participation can be ultimately be overcome. Yet in an increasingly accelerated, globalised world, a re-investment and re-connection with the local is emerging, as evidenced in the increasing popularity of farmer's markets, community gardening and micro-breweries. Often driven by the search for authenticity, these new ways of constructing and reconstructing individual and group identities are engaging the people/place relationship in new and creative ways. Oldenburg (1999) notes:

> The environment in which we live out our lives is not a cafeteria containing an endless variety of passively arrayed settings and experiences. It is an active, dictatorial force that adds experiences or subtracts them according to the way it has been shaped .... when that lesson is learned, community may again be possible and celebrated each day in a rich new spawning of third places. (296)

In this, a new direction to strengthen the public sphere and enrich the Irish third place becomes possible.

Appendix A: *Pub Locations/Fieldwork Sites*





Figs. 36 & 37 Pub locations/fieldwork sites.

Appendix B: *Pub Typology*

Rural/village pubs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Hotel pubs													x					x					x	
Restaurant pubs				x			x		x			x	x					x				x	x	
Discos/night clubs													x					x			x		x	
Music pubs					x									x	x		x							x
Theme pubs									x	x					x			x				x		
'Old man' pubs		x	x			x		x				x		x	x	x			x					
Locals	x		x	x	x	x		x	x		x			x	x		x		x	x				x
Lad/'man' pubs	x										x									x				
'Skid row' pubs																				x				
Business pubs		x				x																		
Trendy/'cool' pubs																		x			x			

Table 2 Rural/village pub typology.

Urban/town pubs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Hotel pubs											x							
Restaurant pubs		x						x			x				x			
Discos/night clubs											x				x			
Music pubs			x					x	x	x		x	x	x				x
Theme pubs		x									x							
'Old man' pubs	x		x															
Locals			x	x	x	x	x		x			x	x	x		x		x
Lad/'man' pubs				x	x	x	x									x		
'Skid row' pubs						x	x									x		
Business pubs																		
Trendy/'cool' pubs											x				x		x	

Table 3 Urban/town pub typology.

Appendix C: *Topic Guide (Phase I)*

I. Informant Profile
Age
Gender (by observation)
Where were you born?
How long have you lived in this area?
Have you lived in other parts of Ireland at all?
Have you lived in other countries?
For what length of time did you live outside of the area that you do now?

Education:
About when did you attend primary school?
Was it a Catholic primary school/Protestant/Project/other?
How far in your education did you go?
Did you take your Jr./Sr. Leaving Cert?
Did you attend 3rd level education?
Do you have degrees, diplomas, etc./what in?

Profession:
Can you take me through your work history (starting from the age of 18) including your present employment?

Religious Affiliation:
What religion, if any, do you affiliate yourself with?
How did you come to join this religion?
How often would you attend religious services?
Would you consider yourself a religious person?

Family life:
Married/Partnered/Single/Widowed?
Children?
Other family members in household?
Do you own your own home/apartment or pay rent?
Income bracket:

II. Individual drinking habits
1. Do you drink alcohol?
2. At what age did you begin to consume alcohol?
3. And did you start to drink regularly after that?
4. When did you start to drink regularly?
5. What age did you begin to drink in pubs?
6. How often do you go out to a pub to drink?
7. Normally what kind of drink(s) do you have in a pub?
8. Under what circumstances would you have a different type of drink in a pub?
9. When you go out to drink who would you normally go with?
10. Can you describe any period in your life that you decided to cut back or take a break from alcohol?

11. Was there ever a time in your life where you drink more than you do now?
    11a. And why are you drinking less now?
12. Can you tell me if there are any people that you drink more than usual with?
13. Are there any people that you find you drink less than usual with?
14. Do you have any close friends that do not drink?
    14a. Where would you socialise with them?
15. Did you ever take 'the pledge'?
    15a. Under what circumstances did you decide to remain alcohol-free/to begin drinking alcohol?
16. How many drinks would you typically consume in a week?
17. Would you consider yourself to be a light/moderate/heavy drinker?
18. Personally, how do you define each of these?
19. Has drinking ever caused problems in your life – yourself or someone else's drinking?

III. General thoughts on drinking

1. What do you think is the most common reason that people drink alcohol?
    1a. What do you think is the most common reason that people abstain from alcohol consumption?
2. Can you tell me about any changes that you've noticed in people's drinking in the last ten years?
3. Binge drinking is also on the increase in Ireland, what would be your opinion on this trend?
4. Drinking among the youth seems to be more common, what do you think about this?
5. Do you think that drunk driving is a problem in Ireland?
    5a. Do you think there should be any limits on alcohol consumption for people who are driving?
6. How do you feel about public drunkenness?

IV. Pub behaviours

1. Can you tell me if there any particular pub that you frequent?
    1a. What makes you want to go to these pubs?
    1b. How often would you go into these/this pub(s)?
    1c. Under what circumstances would you go to these/this other pub(s)?
2. How far do you have to travel to get to your pub of choice?
3. How do you get to this pub?
4. Do you ever go to one of these pubs in order to get out of the house?
5. Do you ever go to the pub on your lunch break?
    5a. Would you have a drink with your lunch?
    5b. Would the pub that you have lunch in be the same pub that you go to at other times?
    5c. How often would you do this?
6. What sort of activities, if any, do you participate in when you go to the pub?
    6a. Would you ever go to a pub to watch an event on television?
    6b. Would you ever go to a pub to go on-line?
7. Do you use your mobile phone in the pub?
8. Would you ever go to a pub and not drink alcohol?
9. Have you ever felt pressure to consume more alcohol?

10. What do you think about the rounds' system?
11. Can you tell me if you drink at home?
    11a. What would be the circumstances of this?
12. Where do you drink most often?
13. Can you describe a typical week where you would go into a pub (including lunch, coffee/tea breaks, etc.)?
14. With whom do you drink with most often?
15. Can you tell me about any pubs that you would feel uncomfortable in?
16. What do you think about the recent pub closures?
17. What is your opinion of the smoking ban?
18. Would there be other places that you spend time socialising outside of the pub?

V. Drinking and gender/gender relations

1. Do you think that the pub is a good place to meet people of the opposite sex?
    1a. Can you describe to me when you might have done this yourself?
2. Alcohol consumption among women has increased in recent years, how do you feel about that?
3. Do you think it is acceptable for women to drink as much as men?
4. What would you think if you were in a pub and saw a woman drinking on her own?

VI. Identity

1. How do you feel about the reputation that the Irish are heavy drinkers?
2. Do you think that the Irish drink more than other nationalities?
3. Do you think that drinking is an important part of being Irish?
4. Would you consider spending time in pubs an important part of being Irish?
5. Have you ever spent time in an 'Irish pub' outside of Ireland?
6. Can you tell me about any experiences that you have had with tourists in pubs in Ireland?
7. How would you describe your social group?
    7a. Can you explain to me how you socialise with your friends/family?
    7b. Where do you spend time with your friends/family?
    7c. How often do you spend time with your neighbours?
8. Can you tell me about where you live?
9. Can you tell me about the people who live around you?
10. Can you share with me the ways, if any, your community changed over the past 10 years?

Appendix D: *Informant Profile*

Drinkers and Non-drinkers

Drinkers	51
Non-drinkers	3
Total	54

Nationality/Ethnicity

Irish	46
Spanish	1
American	2
Polish	2
German	2
Scottish	1
Total	54

Age

18 – 25	11
26 – 30	7
31 – 40	14
41 – 50	12
51 – 60	6
61 – 70	4
Total	54

Gender

Female	23
Male	31
Total	54

County of Residence

Donegal	16
Leitrim	18
Sligo	20
Total	54

Tables 4 – 8 Informant Profile.

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